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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

STATE of the WORLD

With regard to the

THEORY of RELIGION,

IN THREE PARTS.

I. Want of *Univerſality* in Natural and Reveled Religion, no juſt Objection againſt either.

II. The Scheme of Divine Providence with regard to the *Time* and *Manner* of the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Reveled Religion, more eſpecially the *Chriſtian.*

III. The Progreſs of Natural Religion and Science, or the continual Improvement of the *World in general.*

Being the Subſtance of ſome Sermons preach'd before the Univerſity of CAMBRIDGE.

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TO

The Right Honourable

HENRY

Lord Viſcount *Lonſdale*,

Theſe Diſcourſes

Are moſt humbly Dedicated,

In Teſtimony of that Veneration which is due to His LORDSHIP's general Character,

AND

As a Token of Gratitude for his particular Favours to the Author.

PREFACE.

THE following Diſcourſes are part of a much larger Deſign, tending to ſhew that Arts and Sciences, Natural and Reveled Religion, have upon the whole always been progreſſive, from the Creation of the World to the preſent Time; as alſo that they have been ſuited to each other, as well as to the Circumſtances of Mankind, during each Period of this their Progreſſion. A Theory which when fairly repreſented, I have been aſſured would give ſome ſatisfaction to many who being convinc'd of the Exiſtence and Attributes of one ſupreme firſt Cauſe, yet are ſo unhappy as to entertain ſtrong Prejudices againſt every kind of Revelation, chiefly on account of the Circumſtances under which it was ſuppoſed to have been communicated, which they are unable to reconcile with the Courſe and Order of Divine Providence in all other reſpects; as well as to thoſe who are equally at a loſs in ſearching after any ſettled Order or Deſign in either of theſe Eſtabliſhments: but yet if they could once perſwade themſelves in general that one of theſe proceeded in ſome ſort of uniform Ratio *and* Analogy *with the other, and that both were in a State of regular* Progreſſion,

would

would have Patience to wait a while in hopes of seeing their particular Objections gradually removed in each by the same Rules. I have formerly attempted to clear up some of the chief Difficulties that occur in our Conceptions of the Deity and his Providence, in some Observations on ABp. King's *Essay on the* Origin of Evil, *and have since had the pleasure of seeing that System adopted by a late celebrated Writer, and esteem'd worthy of being adorn'd with all the Graces of Poetry. This is in some respects a Continuation of the same design: But being now in a great measure cut off from such Books as were necessary to complete it, I could only draw the Plan, and Outlines, and was forced to content myself with venturing this abroad in the present Form, (though very sensible that it is not the most inviting to Readers of the stamp I just now mention'd) rather than be at the pains of throwing it into one close continued Treatise; especially as I cannot think that my present stock of Materials would have been sufficient to have given that its due proportions, and several things must then have been retrench'd which this more popular Form admits. Some of these probably will seem Repetitions, and yet perhaps be excused, as they come in on different Occasions, and help to set the same Thought in different, and 'tis hoped not altogether disagreeable Views. When I consider*

ſider the Temper of thoſe Perſons for whoſe uſe the following Papers chiefly are intended, I am encouraged to hope that none of my Brethren will eaſily take offence at the freedom I have been obliged to uſe in cenſuring ſome things which ſeem'd to be the greateſt obſtacles to this Progreſs of Religious Knowledge, as well as to hinder both ourſelves and others from perceiving it : at leaſt, that if ſuch Cenſures muſt be deem'd a wounding of our preſent Syſtem, they will at the ſame time be look'd on as the faithful wounds of a Friend. *Nor will it, I truſt, be requiſite to make any farther Apology for the Defects of the Performance which are but too natural on ſo very extenſive a Subject in ſuch hands. As it is, I hope it may prove ſufficient to give general hints in each part of the Scheme propoſed, aud thereby put ſome others on finiſhing what ſhall upon examination bear the teſt. If the Foundation itſelf ſhould appear to be faulty, here is already too much built upon it ; ſince the Conſequences of the whole are pretty obvious.*

I.

Want of *Univerſality*

IN

Natural and Reveled Religion

No juſt Objection againſt either.

Are not my Ways equal? Ezek. 18. 29.

Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo.
Rom. 3. 29.

ACTS xvii. 30.

And the Times of this Ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.

THESE words contain a Declaration of God's gracious intent to reform Mankind by the coming of *Chriſt*, and at the ſame time intimate the preference due to His above any former Inſtitution.

In the foregoing Verſes the Apoſtle had been inſtructing the *Athenians* in the Nature of the true God, and his univerſal Providence. He ſhews them that there is one common Father and Governour of the world, who has made this Earth a fit habitation for the ſons of men and diſtributed them all over the face of it; who has diſtinguiſhed the Seaſons and divided the Nations, and fix'd the bounds and periods of each in ſo regular and wiſe a manner as might lead all diligent obſervers of them to a knowledge of their Author, and put them upon ſeeking out ſome method of expreſſing their Devotion to him. Though here in fact, (as the Apoſtle intimates, v. 27.) they were all but like men groping in the dark, their notions of the Deity very imperfect and obſcure, their wor-

ſhip highly abſurd and irrational. This their Ignorance God was pleaſed for ſome time to *wink at*, (υπεριδειν) to overlook, diſregard, or as it is in a parallel place, * *He ſuffered them to walk in their own ways*, to wander in the ſeveral mazes they had brought themſelves into, the various ſects of Superſtition and Idolatry into which they had fallen: but now he *commandeth all men every where to repent*; or rather publiſhes, (παραγγελλει) proclaims the Tidings of Salvation to all men upon the terms of Repentance; he offers a new Covenant to Mankind in general, from the benefits of which none are abſolutely excluded who ſincerely deſire them.——*Tidings* which ought to be received by all, as they were by the firſt *Chriſtians*, with Joy and Thankfulneſs. But how ſtrangely has the face of things been altered, or rather the nature of them inverted ſince! When through the degeneracy of mankind the benefits of this Divine Inſtitution become reſtrained to a few Nations, and even theſe are taught to deſpiſe it for that very reaſon which uſes to make a benefit the more valuable, namely becauſe it is reſtrained to themſelves.

If, ſay the preſent Unbelievers, *God has made of one blood all Nations of men, and is no re-*

* Acts 14. 16.

ſpecter-

ſpecter of Perſons; and if he deſigns this Revelation for all men, as he muſt, if it be of ſo great uſe and advantage to them;—Why then is it not actually communicated to all?—Why did he ſo long, why does he ſtill *wink at* the Ignorance of ſo many Nations and leave them without any means of coming to the Knowledge of his Truth? Can a God of infinite power and wiſdom be diſappointed in his aim? Or will the common Father of mankind confine his greateſt mercies to ſo few of his Children?—And thus every Argument of the ſuperior excellency of our Religion is made an objection to its Divine Authority, and what ſhould be a particular motive of Gratitude for having received it, is turned into the ſtrongeſt reaſon for rejecting it.

In my following Diſcourſe I ſhall conſider that part of this Objection which relates to the *Manner* of the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation, the other which more immediately affects the *Time* of its delivery muſt be reſerved to a more full examination afterwards.

In anſwer therefore to this part of the foregoing difficulty I ſhall endeavour to prove in the firſt place,

I. That a *partial Communication* of Chriſtianity can be no particular Objection to its Divine

Authority, ſince the Religion of Nature is on the ſame foot with it in this reſpect.

II. I propoſe to ſhew the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Divine Conduct in the Diſpenſation of them both. And

III. The great Benefit of complying with the Terms of the Goſpel, and the Inexcuſableneſs of rejecting it.

I. I am to ſhew that a *partial Communication* of Chriſtianity can be no particular objection to its Divine Authority, ſince the Religion of Nature is on the ſame foot with it in this reſpect.

As the all-wiſe Creator of the Univerſe has been pleaſed to frame different *Orders* of intellectual Beings, ſo he has made a conſiderable difference among thoſe of the ſame order. In *Mankind* the caſe is very evident. We cannot but obſerve a vaſt diſparity between both the *Abilities* and *Advantages* of ſome men and thoſe of others; their *Tempers* of body and *Powers* of mind, and *Circumſtances* in the world; their *Education*, *Opportunities* and *Ways of Life*; the *Station* they are in, or the *Government* they live under. —— Now theſe are ſo many Talents which together make up our portion of *Reaſon*, and ſeverally contribute to the

the forming our Underſtanding and improving our *Nature*. As theſe then are ſo very unequally diſtributed, 'tis plain that our Religious Notions, or our *Law of Nature*, muſt be very different and unequal alſo. The bounds of Duty will be as various as the degrees of Knowledge in every man, and likewiſe be enlarged in proportion to the gradual Improvement in the ſame man.

To ſpeak therefore of one *fixt*, *immutable* and *univerſal* Law of Nature is framing an imaginary Scheme without the leaſt foundation in the nature of things, directly contrary to the preſent order of the whole Creation: 'Tis making the ſame Rule ſuit Beings in all Circumſtances, which is full as abſurd as to preſcribe the ſame food and phyſic to all Conſtitutions. —— To ſtile this Religion of Nature abſolutely *perfect*, or its Light *ſufficient*, can only mean that every one may be as perfect here as God intended him to be, and able to do all that his Maker will require of him, or as much as is ſufficient to excuſe him from *puniſhment*; which is very true, but nothing to the purpoſe: for this kind of Perfection is far from implying an univerſal unchangeable Equality in the *Law of Nature*, or excluding greater Light, ſince it may be very conſiſtent with that

diverſity of Talents abovementioned, and thoſe different degrees of Happineſs and Perfection which are founded in and naturally conſequent upon it. As therefore all the Gifts of Nature are diſtributed in this partial and unequal manner, How unreaſonable is it to object againſt reveled Religion for its being conveyed in the very ſame manner! One who believed any thing of a God and his Providence would naturally ſuppoſe that if a Revelation were to be made at all, it would be made according to the ſame method which is obſerved in the Government of the natural and moral world; at leaſt, he that allows this method to be conſiſtent with the belief of a Deity in the one, cannot ſurely on that account reject the other. [a]

[a] Mr. *Chubb* [Diſcourſe on Miracles, p. 48, *&c.*] endeavours to invalidate this obſervation, by aſſerting, that the two Caſes, are not parallel, becauſe the one could not have been better conſtituted; which he thinks cannot be made appear concerning the other. But if we ſhew that the like or greater Inconveniences would flow from any other aſſignable way of conveying Revelation (which will be attempted in the following part of this Diſcourſe) then we have as much reaſon to aſſert that it could not upon the whole have been conveyed in a better way, and conſequently the objection drawn from its want of Univerſality will be of no more force than that from Inequality is in the common Courſe of Nature, and the two Caſes will ſtill be exactly parallel.

Thus

Thus much may be ſufficient to ſhew that natural and reveled Religion are upon the ſame foot in point of *Univerſality*, and that the Objection holds equally againſt both. And I have been the more brief on this Head as it has been ſo fully diſcuſſed of late by very able writers.*

II. I proceed therefore in the ſecond place, to point out the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Divine Conduct in the Diſpenſation of them both.

1ſt. Of Natural Religion, which as we have ſeen, is proportionable to the different Abilities and Attainments of Mankind, as theſe are alſo to their different Stations and Conditions, both which we ſhall find exquiſitely ſuited to the well-being of the World.

For in the firſt place, *Society* is requiſite in order to ſupply the Conveniences, the Comforts and the Neceſſaries of Life, as well as to ſecure the quiet uſe and ſafe poſſeſſion of them. To preſerve Society, among ſuch frail fallible Creatures, there is need of *Government*, which implies

* See Dr. *Conybeare*'s, Mr. *Foſter*'s, or *S. Browne*'s *Defence of Revelation*, or Dr. *Denne*'s Sermon on the Propagation of the Goſpel, or more at large in Bp. *Butler*'s *Analogy of Religion*, &c. pag. 181. 215. *&c.* Octavo.

dif-

different Stations and Conditions, as theſe again call for different Abilities and Qualifications. All, 'tis plain, cannot be Governours, nor enjoy the benefits which attend ſome Poſts of Wealth and Power: the *many* have nothing left them but to obey, to execute the will of their Superiors, and undergo the Drudgeries of Life. *

The ſame holds in the Body politic as in the natural, there muſt be many inferior and *more feeble Members*, which yet are *neceſſary*, *neither can the Head ſay to the Feet I have no need of you.*—— But now, if all theſe different Members of the world had naturally the ſelf-ſame ſenſe and reliſh of things; if each man had originally and unchangeably the higheſt degree of Underſtanding and Acuteneſs, the greateſt ſtrength of Reaſon and fineneſs of Imagination that is to be met with in any of the Species, how very unequal and incongruous muſt this unavoidable diverſity of Orders prove! How hard would be the caſe of them whoſe lot is to fill the worſt and loweſt Offices, and

* "Illi ergo omnes conditi ſunt ut hæc opera præſtent, "quibus in Civitate opus eſt; conditus eſt autem Vir "ſcientia præditus ſui gratia: atque ita ſimul colitur "Terra, et reperitur Sapientia. Quam ſcite ergo dixit "ille, quiſquis fuit, *Niſi eſſent ſtulti deſolaretur Terra?* *Maimon.* Porta *Moſ.* p. 41.

Eccl^us. 38. 32. 34.

yet

yet who find themſelves as well qualified for, and as highly deſerving too of the beſt (ſince on this ſuppoſition, which leaves it ſo very little in any one's power to improve or benefit either himſelf or others, there could ſcarce be any real deſert at all) as thoſe that hold them, and who likewiſe cannot but be as deeply ſenſible of all that miſery and hardſhip which ariſes from the want of them! The common Intellect and Apprehenſion of Man would be but ill placed in an *Ox* or *Aſs*, nor would the genius and temper of ſome philoſophic mind be any better ſuited to *him that driveth them and is occupied in all their labours.*

But this muſt neceſſarily be the ſtate of things if all men were by nature furniſhed with all thoſe rational or intellectual Accompliſhments which adorn ſome few of them at preſent. Three parts in four of the world muſt be unfit for their particular Circumſtances, and at odds with their Condition. How inconſiſtent alſo would it be in Nature to implant thoſe various Senſes, Appetites and Taſtes in all men, which not one in a thouſand would have power to gratify! That ſublime degree of Reaſon and Reflection which could only prove its own tormentor! Not to mention what ill influence ſuch a Scheme would have on Government itſelf;

itſelf; how difficult it muſt be to rule where every one has the ſame Strength and Skill; how hard to obey, when all have equal Abilities, and therefore (as they might think) an equal right to be their own Directors. In ſhort, how much more wiſe and beneficial is the preſent Conſtitution of things! Where all is left to Mankind themſelves, who have both the *forming* and *diſpoſing* of each other; nay where men are at liberty in a great meaſure to frame their own Natures and Diſpoſitions: where they have no inconvenient or pernicious Principle to lay to Nature's Charge, * no properly innate *Notions* or implanted *Inſtincts*, ‡ no truly natural *Appetite* or *Affection* to ſway or byaſs them, except that univerſal Senſe and ſtrong Deſire of *Happineſs* which was abſolutely neceſſary to their Preſervation. [b] By theſe means we have at firſt only

* See *Ibbot*'s *Boyle*'s *Lect.* 2d ſett, ſerm. 5. p. 143. *&c.* or A. Bp. *King*'s *Origin of Evil*, Note 38. p. 211. 2d Edit.

‡ See the Prelim. Diſſert. to *King*'s *Origin of Evil*, and rem. 1. p. 87, 88. 2d Edit.

[b] To form ſome notion of this, let it be obſerved, that when the firſt foundation of a diverſity of Senſe and Intellect is once laid in a greater or leſs ſuſceptibility of Pleaſure or Pain, by a *Perception* of *Ideas* more acute or dull, more quick or ſlow, and a proportioned *Reflection* on them (which proportion, by the bye, between theſe two Powers [of perceiving and reflecting] is, I believe, in each perſon pretty

ſuch Thoughts and Inclinations inſtilled into our Minds as are agreeable to, and for the moſt part do in fact ariſe from our Place and Circumſtances in the World, and afterwards find room enough to refine, improve and enlarge our Faculties; to qualify ourſelves for, as well as by a right Application of them to merit ſome ſuperior Station whenever it ſhall become void. How regular and beautiful a Subordination muſt this produce! How fitly might the *whole Body thus knit together and compacted by that which every Joint ſupplieth, increaſe with the Increaſe of God*, would Man but enter into the ſame great Plan of exciting Induſtry and Labour and do what lies in his own power to promote it, *viz.* entail Benefits and Succeſſes as the natural conſequence of theſe, and endeavour to ſuit every one's Station to his reſpective Merit and

pretty exactly kept up as to the pitch of their Vivacity in both the abovenamed reſpects, i. e. the *Force* and *Time* of their ſucceſſive Operations, or the Momentum and Velocity of their reſpective Objects)—from hence the whole Tribe of *Affections* &c. and the ſeveral Degrees in each, are very apparently deducible: ſuppoſing only this, I ſay, which ſeems to lie in the *original Stamina* of the Body, and is ſo far not to be accounted for, at leaſt by me; which therefore, and which only, I ſhould term *innate*, or ſtrictly *natural*, ſince every thing beſides, that is comprehended under the name of *Natural Appetite* &c. is properly ſo far from being ſuch that it is evidently poſterior in

Abilities, *i.e.* deal with each perſon according to what *he is*, and obſerve thoſe Rules which the great God of Nature has eſtabliſhed! What

in the Order of Nature, and entirely grounded on the *Ideas* which themſelves ariſe from hence, and whoſe *innateneſs* in all ſenſes of that word is now generally given up: — ſuppoſing then this one foundation laid by Nature, a difference herein will be enough to conſtitute the Being more or leſs ſenſible or rational in general, and tend to make it more or leſs *paſſionate* or *mild*, eager or indolent &c. in whatſoever it applies itſelf to; but can this ever actually determine it to any one peculiar ſett of Objects, or have any tendency towards giving what we mean by a particular Genius, Taſte, or Temper? That, and the whole Conſtitution of the Human Mind, or its predominant Qualities, ſeem to ariſe afterwards from the particular *Aſſociations* which we form ourſelves or learn of others, as theſe grow gradually and even mechanically from the Circumſtances we are in, or from thoſe Objects that more immediately ſurround and ſtrike us; provided that a ſuitable *Attention* and regard be paid to each as it preſents itſelf. For that amidſt all this Mechanic Apparatus we have ſuch a diſtinct Faculty of *attending*, and determining the ſubordinate Powers in conſequence thereof, as is ſtated at large by *A. B. King*, I muſt yet beg leave to ſuppoſe, till all theſe various Appearances which ſeem ſo much to require it (of which in the following note [e].) are ſolved on other Principles, and then indeed this, which it muſt be owned contains ſomething inexplicable, will be of courſe excluded. I may add here, that neither are thoſe *Aſſociations* themſelves, from whence ſome very ingenious Perſons would deduce a total Mechaniſm, altogether *neceſſary*, nor we ſo far paſſive under them as to be left without a power of curbing

and

Emulation muſt this raiſe, joined with the utmoſt care and caution, when each finds it in his power ſo much to improve and advance,

and correcting, breaking and eradicating, as well as of contracting them at firſt and afterwards confirming them: to aſſert this would be advancing a new Doctrine of *Habits* contrary to the general Senſe and Language of Mankind.

Well then, allowing ſuch a degree of Liberty, or active Power to be joined with the other paſſive Ingredients in our Compoſition, as ſuch it muſt in ſome meaſure act independently on each of them and be capable of forming new *Aſſociations* from its own proper Acts, which will extend to all the reſt and influence them; and yet as it will alſo have ſome ſuch ſort of connection with them all as to be itſelf in ſome reſpect or other influenced by them reciprocally, or (which comes to the ſame thing) the *Mind* will be ſo far affected in and through them as to influence it, which we all daily feel. [elſe how come theſe parts of our Conſtitution to be conſtantly applied to with ſucceſs for the determination of it? Why is Pain preſent or in proſpect uſed to move a Man, or Arguments and Motives urged, if they are really Matters of indifference to his *Choice* and have no manner of effect upon it?] As this grows and gathers ſtrength like all our other Faculties and is equally capable of being impaired and rectified again (*King*, Note X. p.406,407. 3d. edit.)—As it is limited and ſubject to its Laws not perhaps wholly different, though of a kind diſtinct, from thoſe of the other Appetites. (however ſuch as make it no leſs governable, ibid. c. 5. §. 5. ſub. 4. p. 420, &c. with notes 70, p. 417. and 71, p. 422, 423.) and cannot go againſt theſe Appetites without manifeſt pain and miſery to the perſon: ib. Not. N. p. 336, &c. — As it may be inclined both by them and its

as well as to impair and debase his *Nature*, and thereby also change his *State!* what eagerness to excell some! what dread of falling below others! what provocation for all to make the best use of their Faculties and Opportunities! This amicable Contest, this perpetual Struggle must certainly make more for the good of the whole, than if all had been passive and absolutely fixed in any degree of Knowledge and

its own course of Operation, and will become daily more and more conformed to them by due regular exercise, which we likewise experience; — its Operations will become as much the Objects of Foreknowledge, nor will it be much less easy to account for either the Formation or *Increase* of any particular Turn of Mind in any given situation, than if all were performed in us necessarily, and at once. This Plan of Human Nature, which derives every thing from so few Principles, and yet makes room for that endless Variety conspicuous in it, might, I am sensible, be set in a good light and shewn to be free from some of the greatest Difficulties that must clog all others. In this view a just Uniformity is, by the Deity so far as he acts, always, and might be by us, preserved among all its constituent parts; our Talents suited to our Capacity of using them; our Sphere enlarged as that increases and regularly keeping pace with our Improvements; each Dispensation put upon a reasonable foot, and all Discoveries made in due proportion to our Qualifications for judging of them, and our Dispositions to apply them. Whereas the contrary Scheme of bringing all things to an original, equal and immediate Intuition, or of fixing every man to certain Impulses or Instincts, independent on his Station and Endeavours and intirely unimprovable by them; this

Perfection or limited unalterably to any State. [a] Upon this Plan only could there be place for Hope or Fear, Reward or Punishment, the only proper means of governing free, rational Agents, and of conducting them to their supreme and truest Happiness, which seems entirely to consist in Agency, and which can only this way be excited. [b] This therefore is the method most agreeable to Wisdom and Goodness, and con-

this must be quite arbitrary, and in a great measure useless, and attended with all the inconsistencies and inconveniences already mentioned. Such would the Consequences be of that pretended *Universal Equability* in Natural Religion; nor is the levelling Scheme so much contended for in Revelation less absurd, as will appear below.

[a] See King's *Origin of Evil*, Note 19. p. 121, *&c.* and Note Y. p. 449, *&c.* We may add that the supposition of any such fixed unimprovable State of natural Good implies, strictly speaking, no less than the Subversion of of all Virtue or *Moral* Good, which is nothing but the chusing to communicate the former [See *King*, R. 1. p. 84, 85. 3d. Edit.] for which Communication there could be no place in such a State, nor consequently any room for any of those Ideas which are founded on it. Nor does this Scheme any better consult the Interest of our *Intellectual* accomplishments, which while it seems to be exalting them is at the bottom taking away their Use and Exercise; while it pretends to constitute an equality among Rational Agents is really destructive of both Rationality and Agency.

[b] See *King*, p. 241, 338, 350, 368, 379, 393, *&c.* with the following Note [c].

ſequently moſt worthy of God. [c] Having thus far conſidered the partial Diſtribution of the Gifts of Nature and by conſequence the Diverſity of natural Religion, and offered ſome Hints towards explaining the Reaſonableneſs and Neceſſity thereof, I proceed to ſhew the ſame concerning *Revelation*. If a Revelation were to be made at all (and I muſt here take it for granted that ſuch a thing is neither impoſſible nor altogether unreaſonable in itſelf) it muſt either be conveyed in the method we are told it was, namely, at firſt communicated to ſome few ſelect Perſons and by them divulg'd and gradually propagated to the reſt of the World; [d] or ſecondly, every particular man

[c] See this deſcribed more at large in Bp. *Butler*'s *Analogy*, p. 93, *&c.* 2d. Edit.

[d] Mr. *Chubb* (on Miracles, p. 68, *&c.*) objects to this firſt method, that hereby it would be in the power of a few men to deprive the reſt of all the benefits of this Revelation. But is not that really the caſe in all the other Benefits of Nature and the ordinary Gifts of Providence? Are not moſt of the Bleſſings of Life communicated to us by the mediation and inſtrumentality of other men, who may be juſt and faithful in communicating them, or otherwiſe? and is it not oft in the power of a ſingle perſon to deprive multitudes of Life itſelf or any of its comforts, of Liberty, Peace, Plenty, Arts, Improvements, *&c.* and is not all this unavoidable while men are allowed the free uſe of their natural Powers,

muſt have it by immediate Inſpiration, and be at all times and in all caſes influenced and directed to it internally; or thirdly, it muſt be publiſhed again and again, and freſh Miracles worked for the Conviction of each Unbeliever in every Age.

In the Second of theſe methods the Inconveniences are very obvious: for Firſt, This Influence, of what kind ſoever it be, muſt either be abſolutely efficacious and irreſiſtible, *i.e.* ſo ſtrong as to ſubvert the natural Powers of Man, and take away his Freedom of thinking and acting, and conſequently deſtroy all Virtue, Merit, Praiſe, Reward; *i.e.* all that is good and valuable in Religion: or elſe it would not be

Powers, which Mr. *Chubb* contends for? Men, he ſays, *are not to be over-ruled* in either the Publication or Reception of Religion; and if ſo, he has yet to explain how that is to be given ſo as not *to leave it in the power and pleaſure of a few*, ſooner or later to reſtrain and ſuppreſs, to diſguiſe and corrupt it; and conſequently *to prevent thouſands and millions of others from ſharing in the benefits thereof.* ib. p. 63. On a little farther conſideration Mr. *Chubb* may probably find that in this Scheme [*i.e.* of Human Liberty] it muſt be impoſſible for any thing relating either to the Minds or outward Circumſtances of Mankind to remain in a ſtate of perfect Uniformity; and then he may be ſenſible too that the ſame Cauſes, which among other things that concern Mankind make their Religion unavoidably continue in this partial and unequal way, will

ſufficient to anſwer the ends propoſed, nor could it certainly and effectually ſecure the Intereſt and Salvation of Mankind. As an *Illumination* it muſt either be diſtinguiſhable from the preſent Effects of Reaſon and the ordinary Operations of the Divine Spirit, or not; if the former, this muſt be by ſtriking us more forcibly, and working a more aſſured infallible Conviction

hold as ſtrongly for its being originally given in the ſame way. Mr. *Chubb*'s ſecond Objection, that if Men could be ſuppoſed to be honeſt and faithful in the publication of a Syſtem of Reveled Religion, then there would be no occaſion for ſuch Syſtem, ib. ſeems to be worſe founded than the other, ſince this Revelation notwithſtanding all the Imperfections that attend its communication may ſtill be the means of conveying ſuch ſuperior Benefits to thoſe who do come to the knowledge of it, of making ſuch Diſcoveries in the Nature both of God and Man, and of affording Motives for Man's attaining to ſuch a degree of Virtue and true rational Happineſs as all their Honeſty, without ſuch helps, could never raiſe the generality of them to. And whether the *ſole* end of Revelation be to bring men to a higher pitch of happineſs than they could otherwiſe attain or not: ib. p. 49. this Author never can prove but that this may be *one* of its great *ends*, and that this End is in fact obtained to as high a Degree as is conſiſtent with his own Scheme of perfect Liberty; ſo that, in the laſt place, allowing God to *foreſee* all the Conſequences and Events attending ſuch an Eſtabliſhment, ib. p. 62. yet this Eſtabliſhment ſo circumſtanced may, notwithſtanding any thing this Author has made out to the contrary, come from him.

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in the Mind: but as much as is added to that, above what may ariſe from the preſent Conſtitution of things, juſt ſo much muſt be taken from the preſent Choice and Merit of believing, and the concomitant Delight and Satisfaction which we feel, and ought to feel, in giving our Aſſent to Truth. [e] Such Evidence muſt either ſuperſede all Action and Enquiry of our own,

[e] See A.B. *King*'s Origin, N. 19. p. 128, *&c.* 3d. Edit. compared with N. 58. p. 349. Whence it appears that though in ſome caſes and reſpects the Aſſent be unavoidable and we merely paſſive in the Attainment of many uſeful parts of Knowledge, and which muſt be attended with ſome ſatisfaction in degree proportioned to the apprehenſion of that uſefulneſs, and of a Kind perhaps very complex, as ariſing from variety of Cauſes accidentally aſſociated; yet neither is the kind nor the degree of this Delight ſo intenſe and exquiſite as that which uſually accompanies thoſe points which we work out ourſelves, which we properly make *our own* by a free, fair inveſtigation. Theſe Truths though of no more importance in themſelves or conſequences than many others that are either forcibly obtruded on us or fortuitouſly thrown into our way, yet are attended with a ſort of ſelf approbation and complacency, which both accompanys the firſt Diſcovery, the tranſporting εὑρηκα, and will continue after it and bear Reflection; and which makes them infinitely exceed all others in our eſtimation. The ſame thing as it is come at in the one or the other of theſe ways is evidently not the ſame to us: which I can aſcribe to nothing more than a conſciouſneſs that in the former caſe we have contributed ſomewhat to the acquiſition of

and overbear the Judgement beyond poſſibility of Doubt, (which yet from the manner of our acquiring and aſſociating Ideas and forming judgements is impoſſible to be conceived, without reverſing the whole Frame of the human Mind; neither would that appear to be at all deſirable, as we have ſeen above) it muſt I ſay, either be inconſiſtent with the exerciſe of our other moſt valuable Faculties, or it would come to the ſame thing with the preſent uſe of them, and prove alike capable of being equally neglected or oppoſed, corrupted or deſtroyed: it would have no other or higher Evidence than in ſome caſes the common Principles of Reaſon have, nor could it lay any ſtronger Obligation on us to obey its Dictates. The ſame will be the caſe with it conſidered as an *Impulſe*, or Impreſſion on the Mind inciting it

it and to our own improvement by that acquiſition; or an Idea of *Merit* conſtantly aſſociated with this kind of Acquiſitions, and which is perhaps the very ſtrongeſt and the moſt agreeable of all our *Aſſociations*. From whence alſo we may collect how neceſſary it is to the Happineſs of Man that he ſhould appear to himſelf to be *free* in the Exerciſe of the Faculties of his Mind as well as the Powers of his Body; to be in ſome degree active in the Attainment of his Knowledge as well as any other Attainments; and how far this will go towards proving him to be really ſo I leave to be conſidered. If he has any real Liberty, there

to follow each determination of the Judgement, and phyſically connecting Thought with Action; ſince this Connection, if much altered from that which is obſervable in the preſent State, or increaſed to any conſiderable Degree above that Harmony which now ſubſiſts among our natural Powers, would be attended with the very ſame Conſequences. * Farther, as all this muſt be tranſacted in a Man's own breaſt, and ſo long as it is limited as above, or he retains the leaſt degree of Liberty, is capable of being ſtifled there, every one might and moſt probably would ſoon diſregard it, as much as he does now the many good Thoughts, Motions and Suggeſtions, which ariſe daily in his Mind. Nor is there leſs likelihood of its being perverted to the worſt of purpoſes, as Intereſt, Vice or Vanity might direct: — of its

there will be a good reaſon for annexing this double Pleaſure to the exerciſe of it, both to excite him to Action in caſes of Difficulty, and afterwards to juſtify him for engaging in ſuch, and enable him to go through all the Toil and Hazard that attends them. If he has none, won't it be a little hard to point out either the Riſe or Reaſonableneſs of this ſo conſtant and ſo general a Deluſion, and to account for ſuch Ideas as thoſe of Merit, Eſteem, Reward, *&c.* which are entirely founded in it?

* See Mr. *Hutcheſon* on the Paſſions. p. 179, 200, *&c.* or *King*'s Eſſay, N. 28, *&c.*

ſoon filling the World with rank *Enthuſiaſm* or the moſt wicked and abſurd *Impoſtures*; and when it is once thus perverted, there ſeems to be no room for any remedy upon this Scheme; no means are left us to detect the Fraud or Folly of any religious pretences whatſoever, no method of reſcuing Mankind from perpetual Deluſion. [f]

[f] The ingenious Author of *Chriſtianity not founded on Argument*, ſeems to adopt this ſecond method of communicating a Religion to Mankind, and carries it ſo far as to ſuperſede all other Means, Divine or Human, that have ever been made uſe of to ſupport it in the World. He contends for *a conſtant and particular Revelation imparted ſeparately and ſupernaturally to every Individual*, p. 112. This he terms *Inſpiration* and *infuſed Evidence*, p. 58. *feeling* and *internal Senſe*, ib. and *of a nature but little differing from that of Intuition*, p. 59. In ſhort, it is what will diſpatch the whole buſineſs of Religion at once without either *Time* or *Teaching*, p. 17. reading or reaſoning, the uſe of our Underſtandings, or the Evidence of our Senſes.—'Tis hard to gueſs upon what Plan this Author would defend himſelf if he were preſſed, but for the preſent he admits one general external Revelation to have been made and recorded [though both upon his Principles muſt have been extremely unneceſſary] and yet labours to diſſwade us from examining the Contents of it, and moſt inconſiſtently attempts to ſhew, as well from Reaſon as this very Revelation, that we ought not to imploy our Reaſon at all either in the Proof or the Interpretation of it, or in any thing elſe relating to the Subject, p. 7, *&c.* A ſelf-deſtructive Scheme! which were it really, as he would

Nor in the Third place, would leſs Inconveniences attend the frequent republication of Religion, and working new Miracles for the conviction of each particular perſon that might be ſuppoſed to want it; ſince theſe repeated Publications when grown common would in all probability be as little minded as the conſtant preaching of it is at preſent. Such a con-

would prove, laid down by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*, and in the *Nature of the thing* or from the *Practiſe of Mankind* ever ſo neceſſary, yet could not poſſibly be kept clear of the Conſequences abovementioned, of which more hereafter. But that this is far from being the caſe may eaſily be ſhewn. That *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles both encourage and enjoin the exerciſe of Reaſon in Religious Matters is plain enough from theſe few Texts. *Matth.* 13. 19, 23. *Mark* 8. 17, 18. *Luke* 1. 4. 12. 57. *John* 5. 39. *Acts* 17. 11, 17. *Rom.* 10. 17. 11. 1. 1*Cor.* 10. 15. 14. 29. 2*Cor.* 13. 5. 1*Tim.* 4. 13, 14, 15. 2*Tim.* 3. 15. 1*John* 4. 1. 1*Pet.* 3. 15. Do ſuch Texts as theſe ſuppoſe *Conviction to precede the Evidence?* p. 37. to which add 1*Theſſ.* 5. 21. where S. *Paul* treating of *Spiritual Gifts* themſelves exhorts his followers to *prove all things* [a hopeful Taſk! ſays our Author p. 76.] and *Rom.* 10. 2. where the ſame great Apoſtle is recommending *Zeal according to Knowledge*, though this Writer is pleaſed to tell us that *ſuch Zeal will ſcarce ever deſerve the name*; p. 25. However, to give this extraordinary Scheme of his a ſcriptural air, he lays hold on ſome paſſages of Scripture Hiſtory [of which in their proper place] and draws in ſeveral detacht parts of ſtragling Texts about the Spirit of God, or ſuch as found that way, which he applies to his point indiſcriminately, whether they concern thoſe ordi-

tinual ſeries of Miracles would in time be no Miracles at all, they muſt loſe all their force together with their Surpriſingneſs and Novelty; nor could they leave any more lively or more laſting impreſſions on us than ſuch as may be

ordinary Aſſiſtances and imperceptible Operations that may be expected from the Holy Ghoſt in every Age, or are confined to his extraordinary, miraculous Gifts, that were, we think, peculiar to the firſt publication of the Goſpel, and produced thoſe wonderful Effects which this Writer alludes to, and which he, with ſome modern Sectaries, ſeems ſtill to claim upon that ever weak foundation of believing ſtrongly that he has the ſame, without being able to bring any of the ſame Proofs in juſtification of ſuch Belief. Though even here he ought to be reminded that moſt of theſe very ſupernatural Gifts were ſo far from exerting themſelves independently on any natural Attainments, that they moſt commonly acted in conjunction with and were adminiſtred conformably to ſuch, and were themſelves improved by Labour, Diligence and Study, or impaired and quite extinguiſhed by Neglect, [See *Whitby* and others on 2*Tim.* 1. 6.] that all of them were ſubject to the Will and Reaſon of thoſe who poſſeſſed them, and to be by them carefully and prudently applyed to the particular Exigences of the Church, and the moſt uſeful Purpoſes of *Edifying*, ſo as to conſtitute the whole a *Reaſonable Service*. 'God when he makes the 'Prophet does not unmake the Man. He leaves all his 'Faculties in their natural ſtate, to enable him to judge 'of his Inſpirations, whether they be of Divine Original 'or no. When he illuminates the Mind with ſupernatural 'Light he does not extinguiſh that which is natural. If 'he would have us aſſent to the Truth of any Propoſition

'he

kept up by thoſe ſtanding Records and viſible Memorials which now evidence to us the Truth of *Chriſtianity*. Not to mention that both of the foregoing Schemes would in ſome meaſure put it out of the power even of God

' he either evidences that Truth by the uſual Methods ' of natural Reaſon, or elſe makes it known to be a ' Truth which he would have us aſſent to by his ' Authority, and convinces us that it is from him by ſome ' Marks which Reaſon cannot be miſtaken in. Reaſon ' muſt be our laſt Judge and Guide in every thing.' *Lock* on *Enthuſiaſm*, A Chapter which I would beg leave to recommend to this ingenious Writer; and when he ſhews us any of the ſame infallible *Marks* of Inſpiration that were formerly exhibited, when he communicates ſome of that *infuſed Evidence* which he can make appear not to have been derived from other Sources, we may be obliged implicitly to follow his Directions; but till then are, I humbly apprehend, at liberty to ſuppoſe that he himſelf is only *following his own Spirit and has ſeen nothing*; and that all theſe *feelings* are no more than the Effects of his own warm Imagination. For that the *ordinary* Operations of the Spirit do not ſuggeſt any thing of this kind, that they are never diſtinguiſhable from the natural workings of our own Minds, much leſs in any reſpect ſubverſive of them; that they are perfectly conſiſtent with the moſt free uſe of all our rational Powers, which are the Gift of the ſame Author and given to be ſo uſed by us, and that theſe generally attend upon their regular Exerciſe and were deſigned rather to preſerve, aſſiſt, improve, than to obſtruct and ſuperſede it, is I think now pretty well agreed. See *King*'s *Origin of Evil*, N. 71. p. 422, &c. 3d. Edit.

Nor

himſelf to bring about a Reformation in Religion when it was once corrupted (as it might eaſily be in both of them) ſince thereby the ſtrongeſt and fitteſt of all means to procure Attention, Awe and Reverence, which we now

Nor can he ſhew that Reaſon thus aſſiſted will be inſufficient for the purpoſes of true Religion, or make out from the *Nature* of theſe two that they ought to have no Communication with each other. His firſt allegation, that Men by the exerciſe of their Reaſon do not, nor can be required to *think all alike*, will not come up to his point, as it is neither true nor neceſſary. 'Tis falſe in many matters both of Fact and Reaſon, on which all men that think at all think in one way, and he has yet to ſhew why the Eſſentials of the Chriſtian Inſtitution may not be included among ſuch, I mean as they lie in the Bible, and ſo far as our aſſent is there explicitly required to them in one and the ſame preciſe determinate manner, on pain of forfeiting the Privileges of that Inſtitution. Theſe he will find to be very few and plain. But though he allows the whole of Chriſtianity to be true and reaſonable, yet he ſeems all along to beg the Queſtion by ſuppoſing that it is of ſuch a nature as is incapable of being made to appear ſo to each perſon ſo far as he is concerned to know either the ſubſtance of it, or its grounds. Hence all the formidable Objections againſt Reaſon's judging of the Goſpel Truths, which yet hold equally in many other Truths of conſequence in common Life, wherein the common People notwithſtanding go on very well by the uſe of their natural Faculties, be they never ſo weak or ſo ſtrongly beſet with Doubts and Difficulties. His other Arguments againſt admitting Reaſon in religious Matters,

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call ſupernatural Interpoſition, would ſoon become familiar, cheap and ineffectual to that end, as was hinted above. Beſides, what Unity or Uniformity of public Worſhip, what Decency and Order could be preſerved in ſuch a State

from ſome particular Inſtitutions and the general Practiſe of the World, are no better founded. That *Children* are introduced into the Chriſtian Church by *Baptiſm* [which our Author ſeems to argue for and goes perhaps a little farther than he will be able to juſtify when he aſſerts it to be *the Ordinance of God himſelf*] and that they have early prepoſſeſſions in favour of Chriſtianity [whereof he ſhews the great uſe and neceſſity, and wherein we moſt heartily join with him] does this render their Religion the leſs reaſonable to them when they are capable of reaſoning about it? Or are they ſtrictly under any other Obligation, when they come to age, of taking it upon themſelves, than what ariſes from their Conviction of the Reaſonableneſs and Wiſdom of ſo doing, from their being ſatisfied of its Truth and Divine Authority; and what they otherwiſe would have been under when thus much ever ſhould come to their knowledge? Surely their being made to underſtand the *Chriſtian* Religion firſt, by no means hinders their giving it a fair examination afterwards, ſo ſoon and ſo far as they become qualified for ſuch Examination. Nay, if they underſtand it thoro'ly they will find that it requires examination from all its Profeſſors in ſome degree or other, as appears ſufficiently from thoſe few Texts above. It does indeed inſiſt upon a right *Belief* and a conformable *Practiſe* in all Perſons to whom it has been fairly propoſed: nor is this either ſo uncommon a thing, or inconſiſtent with what we maintain, ſuppoſing

ſtill

of things? If Men did ever *aſſemble themſelves together*, (the Reaſonableneſs and the Neceſſity whereof will be apparent ſo long as they are capable of having either their Memories refreſhed, or their Affections raiſed by ſenſible

ſtill its Truth and Credibility. Does any Lawgiver proclaim thoſe exceptions to the general obligation of his Laws, which accidentally ariſe from the ſole Incapacity of the Subject, and which common ſenſe is always ready to ſuggeſt and willing to allow for without the leaſt diminution of their Uſe and Obligatorineſs? Or would it be any derogation from their Excellence and Authority; or any excuſe for our not labouring to underſtand theſe Laws, that all men did not reaſon right about them?— Nor does our being to apply by *Prayer for the continuing ſtedfaſt in the Faith, ſhew the Deſign of God that Reaſon ſhould not be at all employed on theſe occaſions*; p. 11. any more than his *working in us both to will and do*, and our being taught to aſk this of him, proves that we have no occaſion to endeavour to *work out our own Salvation*. We do not pretend that Reaſon is itſelf ſufficient either to diſcover all that may be of benefit in Religion, or engage us to obſerve and act up to what it is really able to diſcover, and therefore there is room enough for our ſoliciting the Grace of God as well to ſtrengthen and ſupport this very Faculty, as to bring others into due ſubjection to it; to lead us into the Truth, to make us love and ſeek it; to guard againſt every deviation from it, and enable us to reſiſt the numberleſs Temptations to Vice, Ignorance and a criminal Unbelief. Nor laſtly, would the Difficulties and Diſcouragements which Human Reaſon is too frequently laid under by the practiſe of the World,

Objects; — ſo long as they have either Memory or ſenſes, *i.e.* ſo long as they continue to be Men) in ſuch Aſſemblies *every one of them would have a Pſalm, a Doctrine, a Tongue, a Revelation, an Interpretation* ; and what could

World, were that in truth ſo bad at preſent as this Author repreſents, wholly deſtroy its Influence in the point before us ; or prove any thing more than that its Province is too much invaded by thoſe, be they *Parents*, *Tutors* or *Magiſtrates*, who either wilfully or unwarily impoſe theſe Difficulties, and who alone are anſwerable for giving any handle for ſuch a Plea as he has grounded on them. If the two former conſtantly betray its Cauſe by narrowing the Minds of Youth, and ſhutting up the Avenues of Knowledge ; if they do not teach them carefully the Art of Reaſoning, and lead them to a fair uſe of Reaſon on every Subject within their ſphere and worthy their Enquiry ; or if the laſt intrench upon its Rights by interpoſing their Authority in the grand affair of Divine Worſhip, beyond barely keeping up the eſtabliſhed Form and tolerating others ; If this were indeed the Caſe now, as I hope it is not, this Author, I conceive, ſhould have ſhewn theſe Proceedings to be warrantable, e'er he went on in earneſt to draw ſuch a Conſequence, as that the *whole Subject is abſolutely out of Reaſon's Juriſdiction*. A Conſequence which can tend only to revive *Celſus*'s Calumny againſt the *Chriſtian* Cauſe, Μη εξεταζε αλλα πιστευσον, and recommend the no leſs abſurd modern Maxim that *Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion* ; which renders all that *Scripture* which was given by Inſpiration a dead, uſeleſs Letter, and repreſents that other *Candle of the Lord* as a falſe Light and dangerous, and ſuch as by this Writer's

this produce but Tumult, Strife and an univerſal Confuſion? This ſurely is not ſo *reaſonable* a Service, nor ſo fit for *Edification* as the preſent; not quite ſo proper a Method to convey and preſerve a Syſtem of Divine Truths in the World, as a regular, ſettled Inſtruction and Hiſtoric Faith, grounded on a ſtanding, written * Revelation, which holds theſe forth together with their Proofs to every one, and offers them to the view and examination of all Ages.

When ſome of theſe things are a little attended to, we may perhaps be convinced that either the ſame or as great Objections would lie againſt any other aſſignable Method of communicating a Religion to Mankind.

If then neither all men could be made equally wiſe and perfect, nor Religion be at once equally communicated to them all; if the preſent Laws of our Nature are the beſt that could be, and as ſuch ought to remain inviolate, and we be

Writer's *Motto* is inſinuated to be a Curſe upon us, rather than a Bleſſing. This Notion indeed he has kept to all along, whether ſeriouſly or otherwiſe he knows beſt, and concludes ſuitably enough to it with this piece of Advice to his young Academick, that he content himſelf with being as rational a Chriſtian as his *Siſter* or *Mother*, p. 114.

As to the Inconſiſtencies which this ingenious Writer labours to fix both upon that excellent Inſtitution the *Boy-*

left to the common Methods of informing ourſelves in all natural as well as ſupernatural Truths, it will follow, in the laſt place, that Chriſtianity could not have been propagated otherwiſe than in fact it is, namely, in a gradual, progreſſive, partial manner.

Let it be proclaimed at firſt never ſo far and wide, yet the reception and continuance of it muſt in a great meaſure, we ſee, depend on Mens own Diſpoſitions both natural and moral. Some previous as well as concomitant Qualifications are requiſite to the due exerciſe and influence of it as well in private Men, as public States and Communities: ſo that among a People ſunk in Ignorance or Barbarity, where there is no kind of good Order or Government eſtabliſhed, no regular Forms of Education inſtituted and obſerv'd; where there is an univerſal want of Diſcipline and a Diſſoluteneſs of Manners, there *Chriſtianity* cannot ſubſiſt.

Boylean Lecture, and thoſe worthy perſons who have with ſo much ſucceſs accompliſhed its Deſign, I need only appeal to Dr. *Ibbot*, who, I think, ſtands abſolutely clear of his Exceptions, and has as fully anſwered the End of its great and good Founder, as he has obviated this Author's whole Performance.

* The advantages of this above *Oral Tradition* may be ſeen in *Tillotſon*, V.2. Fol. S.73. p.549. or *Le Clerc* Harm. 3 Diſs. p.615.

Miracles were indeed neceſſary to gain Attention and give Authority to it at firſt, but the perpetuity of them in any kind would (as we have ſeen) weaken that very Attention and deſtroy their own Authority. When therefore a Religion has once been ſufficiently promulged by Divine Authority, it muſt be committed to human means; and left to the conduct of that Nation or Society in which it is planted, and by their care be handed down to Poſterity: it muſt be preſerv'd and propagated in a natural way, and by the ordinary Courſe of Providence, or elſe there is no avoiding the ill conſequences abovementioned, namely, perpetual Enthuſiaſm or Impoſture. As a Syſtem of Divine Doctrines and Rules of Life it muſt be ſubject to the common Methods of Inſtruction, and taught as all other Science is. Youth of all kinds are to be principled and grounded in it, and ſome inſtructed in thoſe other parts of Learning which may fit them for a due enquiry into its original Evidence; for underſtanding the true Nature, Ends, and Uſes of it, and conveying the ſame knowledge down to future Ages. Some Orders of Men likewiſe muſt be ſet apart and authoriſed to explain and inculcate it, to defend its Doctrines as well as to inſpect and to ſecure the practiſe of its Precepts.

From

From all which it appears that ignorant, uncivilized, ſlaviſh and brutiſh Nations, are as uncapable of duly receiving ſuch an Inſtitution, as they are of all thoſe other Sciences, Arts, Improvements which poliſh and adorn the reſt of Mankind, and make Life a Bleſſing.

Without ſome tolerable degree of Learning and Civility men don't ſeem qualified to reap the Benefits of the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution, and together with theſe they generally do receive it, the ſame human means ſerving to improve their Notions in Religion, which help to enlarge their Knowledge in all other Subjects, and at the ſame time directing them to, and in a natural way enabling them to arrive at the moſt perfect Diſpenſation of it. One of the chief Reaſons commonly aſſigned for the *Fitneſs of the Time* of *Chriſt*'s appearing in the World was the extent of Learning and Commerce through all the then known parts of it, * which tended very much to open mens Minds, and qualify them to receive his Inſtitution, as well as paved the way for a more general Communication of it; but as there were many at that time *not able to bear it*, ſo on the ſame account neither yet are they able, nor will they be, till *by reaſon of uſe*

* This is more fully explained in the following Diſcourſes, Part 2.

(as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) *they have their Senſes exerciſed to diſcern both Good and Evil:* Till their rational Faculties be enlarged and improved, their natural Genius cultivated and refined; which ſeems in a good meaſure to conſtitute their reſpective *Fitneſs of Time.* [a]

And as barbarous and ſavage Nations are unable to hear the Truth; ſo vicious, debauched, immoral ones are in like manner incapable of

[a] That the *Chineſe* in particular, from whom ſome have thought that the ſtrongeſt Argument might be drawn againſt what is here ſuggeſted, and whoſe Learning and Education have been ſo much cried up, are very far from deſerving ſo great a Character, ſee *Renaudot*'s Diſſertation on their Learning. *Ancient Accounts of India and China*, p. 200. *Terry*'s *Voyage to the Eaſt Indies*, ſect. 12. and 21. *Travels of ſeveral Miſſioners*, p. 180. &c. or *Millar*'s *Hiſtory of the Propagation of Chriſtianity*, V. 2. p. 266, &c. or *Le Comte*'s *Memoirs*, paſſim. I ſhall give one Inſtance from the laſt mentioned Author in a branch of Philoſophy for which they have been oft particularly celebrated. 'All Nations have ever been aſtoniſhed at *Eclipſes* be-'cauſe they could not diſcover the Cauſe of them: there 'is nothing ſo extravagant as the ſeveral Reaſons ſome 'have given for it; but one would wonder that the '*Chineſe*, who as to Aſtronomy may juſtly claim Seniority 'over all the World beſides, have reaſoned as abſurdly 'on that point as the reſt. They have fancied that in 'Heaven there is a prodigious great Dragon, who is a 'profeſſed Enemy to the Sun and Moon, and ready at all 'times to eat them up. For this reaſon as ſoon as they 'perceive an Eclipſe they all make a terrible rattling 'with Drums and Braſs Kettles, till the Monſter fright-

ned

bringing forth the Fruits thereof. If ſuch a People did receive the true Religion, they would ſoon drop it again, as many Nations moſt undoubtedly have done; at leaſt they would loſe the Spirit, Life and Power of it, and then the bare Name and outward Form will not be worth enquiring after: nay much better would it be if theſe were always quitted too together with the other. *Chriſtianity* cannot immediately

'ned at the Noiſe lets go his Prey. Perſons of Quality, 'who have read our Books, have for theſe ſeveral years 'been undeceived: but the old Cuſtoms (eſpecially if the 'Sun loſeth his Light) are ſtill obſerved at *Pekin*, which, 'as is uſual, are both very ſuperſtitious and very ridiculous. 'While the Aſtronomers are on the Towers to make 'their Obſervations, the chief Mandarines belonging to 'the *Lipou* fall on their knees in a Hall or Court of the 'Palace, looking attentively that way, and frequently 'bowing towards the Sun to expreſs the pity they take 'of him, or rather to the Dragon to beg him not to 'moleſt the World, by depriving it of ſo neceſſary a 'Planet.' *Le Comte*, p. 76. Edit. 1738. comp. p. 93. &c. and Lett. 8. From their notorious Ignorance of, and by conſequence, Contempt for the reſt of the World and great averſeneſs to any Communication with it, till of very late years, we may eaſily account for this ſlow progreſs of theirs both in the Knowledge of Nature and Reveled Religion, notwithſtanding their having had very conſiderable Means of improving both in their hands for ſome time; nor are they wanting in point of Genius, as may be ſeen in the ſame excellent Author.—But this will come in more properly under the 3d Part.

transform Mens Minds and totally change the general Temper and Complexion of any People; but on the contrary it will thereby itſelf undergo conſiderable alteration, and its own Influence and Effect in a great meaſure depend thereon: With *the pure it will be pure*, and they that are otherwiſe will ſoon defile it; will either corrupt it with Fable and abſurd Traditions, or turn it into Licentiouſneſs and carnal Policy.

Thus did the Eaſtern Nations, and were overwhelmed with *Mahometaniſm*, * and thus did a great part of *Africa*. To the like Cauſes, in all probability, as well as the Neglect and Miſbehaviour of its Propagators and Profeſſors, (which have been here but too remarkable [b]) is it

* V. Part II.

[b] Of the former a large account may be ſeen in *Millar*'s Hiſt. c. 8. p. 274. 284. 291. *&c.* and c. 9. p. 376. *&c.* Add Mr. *Warburton*'s judicious obſervation at the end of Sect. 6. p. 306. *&c.* of *Div. Leg.* 2d Edit. As to the latter, we cannot but obſerve the great and general Prejudice which muſt prevail in both the *Indies* againſt all *Europeans* from the injurious treatment they have often received from us, as may be ſeen in almoſt every late account of Voyages *&c.* Numberleſs inſtances of this occur in *Salmon*'s Modern Hiſtory, particularly in the preſent State of the *Sunda Iſlands*, c. 4. Having deſcribed the extraordinary ſuſpicion of the *Japoneſe* whoſe goodneſs and humanity towards us were once as eminent as is their dread

owing that true Religion makes no greater progreſs in the Eaſt and Weſt *Indies*. Though, it muſt be owned, great and good things have been done in it of late by *Societies* eſtabliſhed for that purpoſe, and none perhaps have been more diligent and diſcreet than our own. But it were beyond the Limits of this Diſcourſe to enquire into the State of every Heathen Country in order to ſee what probable reaſons might be aſſigned for either their firſt rejecting or not ſtill retaining *Chriſtianity*. Perhaps it may be enough to have given theſe general Hints, which though they were all founded on mere Conjecture, yet till ſuch an Hypotheſis can be diſproved from Fact, we ought rather to acquieſce in them than confidently arraign

dread at preſent of all *Chriſtian* Nations, he concludes, 'But from whence can all this immoderate caution proceed unleſs from the ill uſage they have met with from *Europeans?* Surely it ſufficiently demonſtrates what I have ſo often obſerved, that we did not find, but make theſe Nations barbarous; and if they have any thing ſhocking in their behaviour at this day, they learnt it from us, who inſtead of planting Chriſtianity and improving their Morals, have in fact corrupted them.' *Mod. Hiſt.* V. 1. 4to. p. 226. Such Obſervations are I fear but too well grounded, and might be carried a great way towards accounting for the ſlow Progreſs of Chriſtianity among ſuch Nations as ſeem otherwiſe not ill qualified for the reception of it. Nor are the frequent Quarrels

Providence, and cenſure its Ways with Man in matters of the laſt importance. But I hope Arguments may be drawn from them ſufficient to ſtop the mouths of our Adverſaries, and ſilence each Gainſayer; a more particular diſcuſſion of which will be the ſubject of ſome following Diſcourſes. I ſhall only beg leave at preſent to add an Obſervation or two concerning a Diverſity of Religion in general, and the caſe of thoſe who cannot attain to the knowledge of the *Chriſtian*.

And firſt, Though I ſee no reaſon to affirm with ſome, that God takes equal delight in the various kinds of Worſhip which come to be eſtabliſhed in the World, and that a ſpecific Difference in Religion is in itſelf and abſtractly conſidered as acceptable to him as that diverſity of Beings which he has made: on the contrary I think he has plainly diſcovered one moſt perfect Standard and requires all to approach as near it as they can; and may be ſaid to approve

among Chriſtians themſelves and their notorious ill uſage of each other a leſs prejudice againſt their Profeſſion, as is obſerved by the ſame Writer, p. 264. 'So extremely 'jealous were the *Portugueſe* of the *Indian* Trade that 'even their Prieſts did not ſtick at the moſt treacherous 'and barbarous methods to exclude all other Nations 'from it, which muſt, no doubt give the *Indians* a very 'great Opinion of the *Chriſtian* Religion they pretended to 'pro-

every approach to it, and prefer that to its oppoſite, in the ſame manner as he does every other excellence and improvement of the Human Mind, where he intends perpetual advancement, as we have ſeen; yet from what has been already ſaid, thus much will appear, *viz.* That one of theſe is in ſome meaſure a neceſſary conſequence of the other during the preſent Laws of Nature in the moral and intellectual World: a difference of Rank and Capacity among Men muſt needs produce an equal difference in their Religious Notions, as was ſhewn above; ſuch difference therefore in degree of Perfection is made neceſſary by the Conſtitution of things and the general Diſpenſations of Providence; and what by the ordinary courſe of Divine Providence is to men in ſome circumſtances rendered unavoidable, that the Divine Goodneſs will in theſe Circumſtances moſt undoubtedly excuſe and accept with all its Imperfections. *

' propagate; nor need we look for any other reaſon why ' *Chriſtianity* does not gain ground in the Eaſt, though ' the *Indian* Princes have given the greateſt encourage- ' ment to the Miſſionaries themſelves upon account of ' their Skill in the Mathematics.'

* See Dr. *Rymer*'s General Repreſentation of Reveled Religion. c. 6. 'Tis a Beauty in Providence to advance ' in the Diſpenſations of Religion; to propoſe various ' Per-

The ſame thing obtains remarkably in each particular Syſtem, even in thoſe of *Chriſtianity* itſelf, which to different Perſons and in different Times and Places appears in a very different Light; though ſo much always every where lies level to all as is abſolutely required of each, and ſo much alſo as will or might have a very conſiderable influence upon their Lives and Manners. And the ſame may in a great meaſure be affirm'd of *Modern Heathens*, the generality of whom ſtill preſerve in ſome degree the great fundamental Principles of one Supreme *God*, a *Providence* and *Future State*, as Authors of the beſt Credit have aſſured us. *

2. As to the caſe of thoſe People in general, we may conſider that if they have fewer and leſs Advantages than others, their Natures and Capacities muſt likewiſe be inferior; to which their future State may be proportioned: God is not obliged to make all men equally perfect in the next world any more than in this; and if their Capacity be rendered leſs than that of an ordinary *Chriſtian*, a lower

' Perfections in Piety and Virtue upon Earth, and anſwer ' them with reſpective Promotions in Heaven,' p. 152.

* A Collection of them may be ſeen in *Stackhouſe*'s Body of Divinity Part 3. c. 8. S. 2. 3. p. 528. *&c.* or *Millar*'s Hiſt. of the Prop. of *Chriſtianity*, c. 5. *&c.*

degree

degree of Happineſs may fill it. However, we need not be very ſolicitous about their Eſtate, much leſs caſt any ungrateful imputation on the Governour of the World for not having dealt ſo bountifully with them as with ourſelves; ſince we know that in all caſes every one will at length be *accepted according to that he has, and not according to that he has not*; and that *to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required.* We know that all their Souls are in the hand of a moſt merciful Creator, all *whoſe ways are equal*, and who will moſt aſſuredly deal with every one according to what is juſt and right. But of this more hereafter.

I come in the laſt place briefly to obſerve the great Benefit of complying with the Terms of the Goſpel, and the inexcuſableneſs of rejecting it.

The Benefit of the Chriſtian Inſtitution above all others appears, in that it naturally fits Men for an higher degree of Happineſs, as well as entitles them to it by poſitive Covenant. It gives them more juſt and worthy Notions of the Divine Being, and the Relation they bear to him, and of the Duties which reſult from that Relation. It explains, improves, exalts all thoſe Virtues and good Diſpoſitions which are the natural *Foundation* of Happineſs both in this

this world and the next. It directs us to add to our Faith *Virtue*, and to Virtue *Knowledge*, and to Knowledge *Temperance*, and to Temperance *Patience*, and to Patience *Godlineſs*, and to Godlineſs *Brotherly Kindneſs*, and to Brotherly Kindneſs *Charity*. It propoſes to our Study *whatſoever things are true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely and of good report*, and binds all theſe upon us with the ſtrongeſt *Sanctions*; at once giving us the moſt ample Inſtruction in and incitement to the practiſe of our Duty, and moreover affording all neceſſary Means of *Grace* in order to prepare and train us up for Glory. And thus, as St. *Peter* ſays, *hath the Father given unto us all things that pertain unto Life and Godlineſs, through the knowledge of him that hath called us unto Glory and Virtue, — that at length we might be partakers of the* DIVINE NATURE.

The great Condition of this Covenant is expreſſed in the Text and many other parts of Scripture by *Repentance: Repentance from dead works and ſerving the living God.* This was the ſubſtance of our Saviour's preaching, and what the Apoſtles *continually teſtified both to the Jews and alſo to the Greeks*, namely *Repentance towards God*; * that is a thorough Reformation of

* Acts 20. 21.

Mind

Mind and Temper, a renouncing of this World its Vanities and Vices, and an improvement in all thoſe Graces and good Habits which are abſolutely neceſſary to fit us for the Preſence of God, the Society of Angels and Spirits of juſt Men made perfect. How gracious a Deſign this! how reaſonable, juſt and holy an Inſtitution! How ſtrongly muſt it recommend itſelf to every man's Judgement and Conſcience, when once rightly underſtood! and what infinite reaſon have we to give continual thanks unto the Father who hath not only prepared for us an *Inheritance*, but likewiſe laboured to make us *meet* to be *Partakers* of it *among the Saints in Light!* and *how ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* How diſingenuous and ungrateful muſt it be to refuſe and put it from us! How dangerous to contemn and blaſpheme it!

To conclude, May the Mercies of God in *Chriſt Jeſus* engage every one of us in time to obey the Divine Precept in the Text; to ſhake off more eſpecially all ſuch Vices as the Heathens of old delighted in, and which betray too many now a days into the like State, and blind their Eyes, and harden their Hearts againſt all poſſible Conviction, namely, Pride, Covetouſneſs and Senſuality. May we all comply with the

the Apoſtle's advice in *walking circumſpectly towards them that are without*, ſince the reaſon aſſigned is in ſome reſpects of as great force at preſent, — *becauſe the Days are evil.* As Infidelity ſtill abounds and the Love of many waxeth cold, we who profeſs the Faith of *Chriſt* and think we have more perfect underſtanding of it, and are to communicate the ſame to others, we ought to contend ſo much the more earneſtly for it, and labour to adorn the Doctrine of our Lord in all things. To our daily Prayers therefore let us add our conſtant Endeavours that the *Kingdom of God may come* on thoſe who have not yet received it, and be reſtored in purity and perfection to ſuch as have rejected it: and finally, let us beware leſt in any of us be found *an evil Heart of Unbelief*; let us take care that we be not of thoſe who either in Principle or Practiſe *draw back unto Perdition*; *but of them that believe to the ſaving of the Soul.*

The

II.

The Scheme of Providence,

With regard to

The *Time* and *Manner* of the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Reveled Religion.

Creſcat igitur oportet, et multum vehementerque proficiat, tam ſingulorum quam omnium, tam unius hominis quam totius Eccleſiæ, ætatum ac ſeculorum gradibus, intelligentia, ſcientia, ſapientia. Vinc. Lirinens. Common. 1. 28.

GAL. iv. 4.

But when the Fulneſs of the Time was come, God ſent forth his Son.

THE Coming of *Chriſt* in the Fleſh is a Diſpenſation ſo full of Wiſdom and Goodneſs, that in whatever view we conſider it 'twill appear moſt worthy its Divine Author. The preciſe *Time* in which he was manifeſted, though it has been made the ſubject of more Cavils ancient and modern than any other Circumſtance attending it, yet I doubt not but upon a fair examination may be diſcovered to bear the ſame Characters.

On this head the following Queſtions are uſually aſked. If the common Father of Mankind be infinite in Goodneſs, and the *Chriſtian* Scheme be the only acceptable way of worſhipping him and abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation, Why was it not communicated to the World much ſooner? Why was this greateſt of all Bleſſings kept back to the laſt,—to the *End of the World*, as it is called?* Nay, 'if God 'always acts for the good of his Creatures, 'what reaſon can be aſſigned why he ſhould

* Heb. 9. 26.

' not *from the beginning* have diſcovered ſuch ' things as make for their good, but defer the ' doing of it till the time of *Tiberius?*' * —All the late Adverſaries to *Chriſtianity* lay the greateſt weight on this Objection, and accordingly ſeveral Arguments have been offered to remove it; I ſhall ſelect ſome of them, which ſeem the moſt concluſive, in my following Diſcourſe, and add ſuch farther Obſervations as may help to ſet the whole in a proper Light.

When the *Fulneſs of the Time* ‡ was come — The Apoſtle in this Chapter is comparing the Ages of the World to the Life of a Man and its ſeveral Stages, as Infancy, Childhood, Youth, Maturity. If we reflect on this compariſon we ſhall find it very juſt in general, and that the World itſelf, or the collective Body of Mankind, as well as each particular Member, has from very low beginnings proceeded by a regular gradation in all kinds of Knowledge, has been making ſlow advances towards Perfection in its ſeveral Periods, and received continual improvements from its Infancy to this very Day. [a] And

* Chriſtianity as old, *&c.* p. 196. 4to.

‡ Or the proper Seaſon. v. *Tit.* 1. 3.

[a] For an explanation of this, ſee Dr. *Edwards*'s Survey of all the Diſpenſations of Religion, *&c.* V. 1. p. 396. and V. 2. p. 615. — 21, *&c.* or Mr. *Worthington*'s Eſſay on *Man's Redemption* c. 8. *&c.*

though

though in both caſes this progreſs be ſometimes interrupted, and the courſe of this World and its Inhabitants appear, like that of the Heavenly Bodies, to ſuffer ſome Retrogradations; yet we have reaſon to believe that theſe are ſuch for the moſt part in appearance only, that this very Lett in like manner where it is real, makes way for a more rapid progreſs afterwards, which ſeems to bring matters into the ſame State upon the whole as if they had been all the while progreſſive. Farther, every one that looks into the Hiſtory of the World muſt obſerve that the Minds of Men have all along been gradually opened by a Train of Events ſtill improving upon and adding light to each other, as that of each individual is, by proceeding from the firſt Elements and Seeds of Science to more enlarged views and a ſtill higher growth. Mankind are not, nor ever have been, capable of entering into the Depths of Knowledge at once, of receiving a whole Syſtem of Natural or Moral Truths together; but muſt be let into them by degrees, and have them communicated by little and little, as they are able to bear it. In this manner does every Art and Science make its way into the world: And though now and then an extraordinary Genius may ariſe and reach as it were ſome Ages beyond that in

which he lives, yet how few of his Contemporaries are able to follow him, or even underſtand what he delivers! The generality ſtill go on ſtep by ſtep in gathering up and digeſting ſome ſmall portions of that vaſt ſtock of Knowledge which he pour'd out at once, and are for a long time in reſpect to him but mere Children. So that notwithſtanding a few ſuch extraordinary inſtances, I think, we may affirm in general, that from the very beginning of the world, Science, or all kinds of intellectual Accompliſhments, have been found to make very ſlow, and pretty regular advances among the the bulk of Mankind; but that upon the whole, advancing they have been and are. This, I ſay, is generally ſo in fact, [a] and therefore will have place in religious, as well as all other Truths among men either taken collectively, or in each individual. Why the caſe is thus in both; why all are not adult at once both in Body and Mind, concerns not Revelation to account for, ſo much as the Religion of Nature, at leaſt they are here, as in the former caſe, both on the ſame foot, and the ſame Principles may be applied to each of them. And though in this reſpect the Divine Diſpenſations ſeem to differ from Human Arts

[a] A more particular Proof of this will be given in the 3d Part.

and

and Sciences, that theſe are commonly the moſt rude and imperfect at firſt, and every part of them improving by repeated Tryals; whereas the others have all that purity and perfection at their Delivery which they are deſigned to have, and rather loſe in many reſpects than get by length of time; yet will not this make any material difference on the whole.

To ſtate this matter right, we ought to diſtinguiſh both between the Delivery of a Doctrine, and its general Reception in the world; which we know is always according to the Meaſure of the Recipients only, which muſt chiefly depend upon the State and Qualifications of the Age they live in: and alſo between the ſupernatural Aſſiſtance and extraordinary Impreſſions at its firſt publication, and the ordinary State in which it appears, and the uſual progreſs it makes, as ſoon as ever theſe come to ceaſe, and it is left to be continued by mere human means (as we have ſhewn before that it muſt be) when we ſhall find it partaking of the taſte and temper of the Times through which it paſſes, and propagated in the ſame gradual, partial manner as all other parts of Science, all Human Acquiſitions and Improvements are.

Let us proceed then to conſider the ſeveral Diſpenſations of Religion in this light, and ſee whether each will not appear to have been delivered in its proper Time, and as ſoon as it became fully neceſſary; as alſo whether each was not as perfect as it could be ſuppoſed to have been, conſidering the ſeaſon in which it was delivered, and every ſubſequent one an improvement on thoſe that went before.

We will enquire Firſt what proviſion God made for the Inſtruction of Mankind in the *Infancy* of the World, and whether it was expedient to ſend his Son upon their firſt Tranſgreſſion.

Now we have reaſon to ſuppoſe that *Adam* during his ſtate of Innocence held conſtant communication with the Deity,[a] from whence he received his information of things and was directed in the uſe of them.[b] And if he had been content to follow that Direction, he would undoubtedly have been ſecured from any pernicious Errors, and

[a] *Gen.* 2. 23, 24. compared with *Matth.* 19. 5. *Mark* 10. 7. and 1 *Cor.* 6. 16. See Bp. *Bull* on the ſubject. *Diſc.* p. 182, *&c.* Only let it be obſerv'd that what this learned Author, with ſome others, attributes to Divine *Inſpiration*, in this caſe, ſeems to be more naturally accounted for from an expreſs *Oral Revelation* made to *Adam*.

[b] *Gen.* 1. 28.— 30. 2. 29. See the Authors referred to by *Patrick* on *Gen.* 2. 17.

ſup-

ſupplied with all the Inſtruction and Aſſiſtance, which was neceſſary for him, and trained up by degrees to as thorough an acquaintance with the Nature of God and the things around him as was agreeable to his own Nature, and conſiſtent with his State and Circumſtances in the world. But upon his rejecting this Guide, and applying elſewhere for Knowledge, and ſetting up to be his own Director, * that Communication might both with juſtice and wiſdom be in a great meaſure withdrawn from him, and he left to the imperfect notice of his Senſes, to learn the Nature of both Good and Evil, and the way to obtain the one and avoid the other, by a painful experience. [a] Yet was he not left wholly to himſelf in the affair of Religion, but directed to ſuch a form of Worſhip as ſerved to point out and perpetually remind him, both of the demerit of his Crime and the dreadfulneſs of that Penalty which he had incurred, and alſo gave him ſome hopes of future Pardon,

* That he intended nothing leſs than this by eating of the forbidden *Tree*, which was to him the trial of his Submiſſion to, or his Rejection of the Divine Government, the *Teſt of Good and Evil*, may be ſeen in Mr. *Rutherforth*'s account of that Tranſaction. *Eſſay on Virtue*, c. 11. Note [a] p. 273. *&c.*

[a] See A. Bp. *King*'s Sermon on the *Fall.*

and a final Acceptance with his Creator. All this ſeems to have been ſignified by the Inſtitution of *Sacrifices*, ſetting before him all the Horrors of that Death which he had been ſentenced to undergo, but which was hitherto ſuſpended, and that of ſome other Creatures demanded in its room by way of ranſom and expiation made to the Lord of Life. [b] This, together with the Promiſe of a future Deliverance in the *Seed of the Woman*, ſerved for the preſent to afford ſome comfort to our firſt Parents under their heavy ſentence, and to con-

[b] See *Revelation examined with Candour*, V. 1. p. 144, *&c.* or Dr. *Burnett*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. Fol. p. 517, *&c.* and the following Notes.

[c] What that was may be ſeen in *Hallet*'s Diſcourſes, V. 2. p. 276, *&c.* or at the beginning of *Locke*'s *Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity*.

[d] After all the Diſputes about the Origin and Intent of *Sacrifices* as well before as under the *Moſaic* Law (when they are taken in the ſtrict Senſe and diſtinguiſhed from all other Offerings that accompanied either Prayers or Thanks for particular Bleſſings) I am forced to refer them to Divine Appointment, and think we may conceive them to have been fixed both by way of poſitive *Mulct* or *Forfeiture* [v. Morality of Religion, p. 35. *Abarbanel.* Exord. Com. in *Lev.* p. 313. *Le Clerc.* in *Lev.* p. 12] to render every breach of Duty burdenſome and expenſive to the Sinner; and likewiſe for a *Teſtimony* and *Symbolical Repreſentation* of his Repentance and Confeſſion of ſuch breach: and laſtly, as a *Federal Rite* denoting in a more eſpecial manner the terms of that great Covenant Grant or Promiſe

vince them that their offended Maker was not wholly implacable; as well as to lead their Poſterity to ſuch Notions of Religion and kind of Worſhip, as ſhould conſtantly reconcile them to the Deity, and remove the Guilt of their particular Offences, and alſo prepare them for the great *Attonement* to be offered in due time, which was to take off the whole of *Adam*'s Curſe [c] and reſtore both him and his Poſterity to that immortal Life which he had forfeited. [d] Nay raiſe them to a much higher degree of Happineſs than he could be conceived to enjoy

miſe whereby Man was to be delivered from the effects of the *firſt breach*, which as ſuch was in each Diſpenſation thought proper to be particularly diſtinguiſhed. All which Appointments, Grants or Covenants, may likewiſe be underſtood (not in their literal ſtrict Senſe, or as in themſelves abſolutely neceſſary, but) as ſo many Schemes of Government or convenient Methods of Divine Oeconomy, treating Mankind, (not like Philoſophers, but) as the generality of them always were to be treated, and leading them gradually to as juſt and worthy Notions of God and themſelves as they became capable of receiving. —But to aſcribe ſuch an Inſtitution as this of ſacrificing Animals wholly to the invention of Men, eſpecially the Men of thoſe times, ſeems very unnatural: of which more in the following Notes. — That this had actually ſuch an effect upon the *Jews* as we laſt mentioned; that they were led to expect an *expiatory* Sacrifice from the *Meſſiah*, and commonly thought and ſpoke of him in that capacity, ſeems probable from *John*'s account of *Chriſt* at his very firſt appearance. *Joh.* 1.29. and again v. 36.

in

in his Paradiſaical State. [c] And that this Rite with all its Circumſtances was enjoined by God himſelf and explained to our firſt Parent is more than probable, even from the ſhort account we have of thoſe Times; ſince we find his two Sons bringing their Offerings to a certain place, * and well appriſed (by ſome viſible tokens no doubt ‡) when they were accepted, as that of *Sacrifice* was rather than the other, and moſt likely accepted for that very reaſon becauſe it had been appointed by God himſelf, and was perform'd agreeably to his Command. [a]

[c] See A.B. *King*'s Note 81. p. 466, *&c.* 3d. Edit.

* *Gen.* 4. 3, 4.

‡ *Heb.* 11. 4.

[a] See *Revelation examined*, v. 1. p. 134, *&c.* Bp. *Sherlock's Uſe and Intent of Propheſy*, p. 73, *&c.* or *Rymer's Repreſent.* p. 30, *&c.* This one Article of the Diſtinction made between *Abel's* Offering and that of *Cain*, which according to the Hiſtory was ſo notorious as to deject and irritate the latter, and which cannot I think be accounted for otherwiſe than by the Interpoſition of God, nor that remarkable Interpoſition ſolved on other Principles than *Cain*'s preſuming to omit the preſcribed *Victim* (otherwiſe his Portion of the Fruits of the Ground might well appear to be as juſt and natural a Tribute of Devotion from one in his province, as ſome part of the Flock was from his Brother, as we have not the leaſt intimation of any difference in the ſincerity of their Diſpoſitions whereon to ground the above Diſtinction between them) this, I ſay, ſeems a ſufficient proof that Sacrifice was of Divine Inſtitution, and is but ill reſolved by *Spencer* L. 3. c. 4. S. 2. The ſame

The *Time* of their Worſhip ſeems likewiſe to have had the ſame origin, as well from God's bleſſing and ſanctifying the Seventh day, † and the ancient method of reckoning by Weeks ‖ [a method much more ancient than the obſervation of the ſeven *Planets* to which *Le Clerc* aſcribes it. *Not.* ad *Grot. de Ver.* 1. 16. p. 42.] As from the earlieſt obſervance of that Sabbath in all Nations of the World, [b] without any ground in nature for ſuch practiſe, or the leaſt hint or probability of its ariſing from Human Invention. [c]

ſame thing is inferred with a good deal of probability from the mention of thoſe *Coats of Skins which the Lord made for Adam and his Wife*, Gen. 3. 21. which ſeem moſt likely to have been of thoſe Beaſts that were offered in ſacrifice, and might perhaps be in ſome meaſure of the ſame intendment with that Sacrifice; for the diſcovery of which rather difficult and diſagreeable way of Worſhip one would think they ſhould ſtand in need of God's particular direction, as much at leaſt as for that other more eaſy and obvious one of clothing themſelves. Concerning the uſe and propriety of this kind of clothing at that time, ſee *Leland*'s Anſw. to *Chriſtianity as old, &c.* p. 503, *&c.*

† *Gen.* 2. 3. *Exod.* 16. 25, 26.

‖ *Gen.* 8. 10, 12. 39. 27. *Eccl*[us]. 22. 12.

[b] *Joſeph.* contra. Ap. L. 2. *Exod.* 16. *Philo de Op. Mund. Selden de Jur. N.* L. 3. c. 10. 11. *&c. Euſeb.* Evang. Præp. 13. 12. *Grot. de Ver.* L. 1. c. 16. comp. *Univers. Hiſt.* Note M. p. 602. and *Allix*'s *Reflections.* B. 1. c. 7.

[c] See *Rymer*'s *Repreſent. of Reveled Religion*, c. 2. And the ſame may be ſaid of *Tithes. Jenkin.* V. 1. p. 102. Authors on

And that in thoſe days they had frequent intercourſe with the Deity, and were made ſenſible of his eſpecial preſence in ſome places, appears farther from his Diſcourſe with *Cain* both

on each of theſe points may be ſeen in Dr. *Waterland*'s firſt Charge, p. 41. *&c.* On Sacrifices in particular *Carpzov.* Introd. p. 118. and *Budde Hiſt. Eccl.* P. 1. S. 1. 30.**. p. 115. The Diſtinction that we meet with afterwards [*Gen.* 7. 28, &c.] between clean and unclean Beaſts, which manifeſtly relates to Sacrifice, ſhews likewiſe the continuance of that kind of Worſhip, and ſeems to prove that it was not owing to any human eſtabliſhment, any more than this diſtinction itſelf could be. And that the Men of theſe, as well as after Ages, had both ſufficient authority and inſtruction to uſe the Fleſh of the former ſort of Beaſts for Food, as well as clothe themſelves with their Skins, appears to me as plain as that the tending and taking care of ſuch was their chief buſineſs and occupation. Nor can I comprehend what merit there could be at any time in their making *Offerings unto the Lord their God of that which coſt them nothing*, of that which they could not eat; or how they came to diſtinguiſh [which they did very early] between *Fat* and *Lean*, between the *good choice pieces*, and others, unleſs they had taſted them themſelves: though 'tis upon this chimerical ſuppoſition that the uſe of Animal Food was not included in the original Grant of abſolute Dominion given to Mankind over all the Creatures [ſome of which could be of no other ſervice to them] that the great *Grotius* and others founded their attempt to explain away all Animal Sacrifice before the Deluge. ' Eædem pecudes, quæ ad eſum, etiam ad ' ſacrificia a *Noacho* adhibitæ; ſcil. mundæ quotquot erant ' *Gen.* 8. 20. Hic ſacrificiorum uſus cùm Diluvio ſit anti-

' quior,

before and after the Murther of his Brother,* as alſo from *Cain*'s Complaint of being hid from his *Face*, † and his going out from the *preſence of the Lord.* ‡ Nor is it at all likely that *Adam*,

' quior, idem de pecudum eſu nobis perſuaſum, contra ' quam multi ſentiunt. Neque enim *Abel* in ſacrificium ' id obtuliſſet Deo, quo veſci nefas credidiſſet, et fruſtra ' paviſſet agnos quibus non licuiſſet uti. Quin ipſa diſtinctio ' animalium in munda et immunda docet alia permiſſa ' fuiſſe, alia prohibita. Neque enim in animalibus natura ' ſuâ quicquam immundum. Sed immundum id eſt ex lege, ' cujus eſus interdicitur. Itaque illud, *Gen.* 1. 29. *Vobis erit* ' *in cibum*, non ſolum ad plantas referimus, ſed etiam ad ' Animalia, de quibus præcedenti verſu actum fuerat. *Bochart. Hieroz.* p. 11. edit. 4. Comp. Bp. *Clayton*'s Anſw. to Dr. *Delaney* in the blood-eating Controverſy. — I am extremely ſorry to find here that I have been differing from the ingenious Author of *Philemon* to *Hydaſpes*, who in his fifth Part is ſo far from allowing any kind of Sacrifice to be a Divine Inſtitution, that he declares ' the general ' Notion of the thing itſelf to be in every view of it ſo ' glaring an Abſurdity, that he is amazed that it ſhould ' ever enter into the head of any Rational Creature.' p. 10. As I have the greateſt deference for the Character and Sentiments of ſo very worthy and able a writer, I think myſelf obliged to add a few words more in conſidering ſome of the Reaſons offered to ſupport this Declaration. Firſt, ' The very Idea of a Divine Being implies in it ſuch ' a ſuperior Excellency of Nature as to be wholly out of ' the reach of our good Offices.' He neither wants, nor can receive Benefit from them. *ib.* Nor, Secondly, ' can ' we ſuppoſe that the Gods ſhould ever be pleaſed with ' the mere waſte of their own Productions,' p. 13. Thirdly,

* *Gen.* 4. 6, 9. † *v.* 14. ‡ *v.* 16,

who ſeemed to be ſo well acquainted with the *Voice of God in the Garden* * upon his Fall, ſhould never have heard it there before on other occaſions. In theſe times therefore God

Thirdly, 'It gives one a very degrading Idea of their 'Goodneſs to conſider them as entering into a kind of 'Merchandize with Mankind in the matter of their 'Favours,' p. 14. and p. 20, 'The Demand of the Life 'of a perfectly innocent Creature to be offered up in 'Sacrifice to God could give but ſmall encouragement 'to hope that God intended to favour a guilty one.'

But I cannot apprehend that ſuch an Intercourſe as was kept up between God and Mankind by the forementioned Offerings muſt neceſſarily be taken in either the Firſt or Third of theſe Views, ſince the like Intercourſe is not always ſo underſtood even among Men, ſome of whom are too far exalted above others to receive any advantage from them, yet nevertheleſs expect ſome dutiful Acknowledgement of the Benefits which they confer on others, and require frequent Teſtimonies of their Love: and why ſhould not we imagine a ſincerely devout Sacrificer to the Deity able to interpret his Devotion in the ſame ſenſe? or if led to a more groſs interpretation of it, why may we not even ſuppoſe the Deity condeſcending in that caſe to ſet him right by ſome ſuch kind expoſtulation as the following? *Will I eat the Fleſh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats? If I were hungry I would not tell thee; for the World is mine and the fulneſs thereof. Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the moſt High. And call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* Nor does there ſeem to be any more *Merchandize* in any ſort of Sacri-

* *Gen.* 3. 8. 10.

was pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf to the *Senſes* of men, and viſibly conduct them by the *Angel* of his preſence in all the chief concernments of Religion. And this *infant* ſtate of the World

Sacrifical Offerings, than in thoſe other of Vows, Prayers, Praiſes and Thankſgivings, which ſtill make up an eſſential part of our Religion, from their relation to which the former always derived all their value, and were perhaps only a ſtrong, lively manner of expreſſing them; nor probably more ſtrong and explicit than might be neceſſary for the times; nor likely to convey any more degrading Ideas of the Divine Goodneſs [at leaſt not more than were adapted to and unavoidable in the then low ſtate of reaſoning] than does the inward Tribute of *a broken and a contrite Heart*, which is ſtill requiſite on ſome occaſions; as well as the outward publick profeſſion of our dependance on the Deity, the *rendring to him the Calves of our Lips*, which when the underſtandings of Men were ripe for it, and they able to keep up a tolerable ſenſe of Duty by theſe means, have of themſelves been and are accepted by the ſame *gracious* Being in the room of the other, (*Hoſ.* 14. 2. *Heb.* 13. 15.] though theſe be founded equally on Human Weakneſs, and at a like diſtance from the excellency of the Divine Nature.

As to the *Conſumption* of the Fruit of the Ground in Offerings, why might not men conceive that the ſame God who had given them all things richly to enjoy, might reaſonably expect a return as it were of ſome part of them merely in token of Gratitude for the reſt, as an exerciſe of their Faith, in a memorial of their Dependance on him for a continuance of them, and a pledge of their Obedience in applying each to the good purpoſes for which he had beſtowed them? without the leaſt dread of affronting

him

muſt ſtand in need of his eſpecial guidance and protection. They were not yet able (with *Moſes* *) to look up to him *who is inviſible*, and perform a purely rational and ſpiritual

him by an implication that he either wanted ſomething, or reaped Benefit by their Preſents.

Nor need even ſuch as had the moſt imperfect Notions of his Power and Bounty apprehend this to be any dangerous miſapplication of theſe Gifts, on a perſwaſion that he had required it; though without ſome Tradition of that, *Socrates* himſelf [p. 10.] might perhaps juſtly doubt of the propriety and acceptableneſs of this kind of Worſhip: as he had the like ſcruples about *Prayer*. [*Plat. 2 Alcib.*]

But if ever theſe or any ſuch Offerings were in fact required, and theſe or the like ends might be ſerved by them [otherwiſe we ſhould indeed have no room to believe they were] then will this be far from *a mere uſeleſs waſte*, though the things offered be deſtroy'd: nor indeed can I ſee any material difference between a religious Dedication of ſuch things and the Deſtruction of them; or how they could be preſented to the Gods at all if they were ſtill kept for the uſe of their Owners.

The caſe, I apprehend, will not be much different as to the *Life of an innocent Creature*; for if this Creature be conſidered as man's Property, why may not the Oblation of it be aſſigned by way of Compoſition, Mulct or Commutation for ſuch Faults as he is ſenſible of, and ſerve as a ſignificant repreſentation and acknowledgement of ſuch his ſenſe, and be accepted by the offended Governour of the World in lieu of a more condign Puniſhment? by virtue of ſuch aſſignment doing away his Guilt, and being a ſufficient Ground of Encouragement for him to hope for a full reſtoration to the Divine Favour, without any

* *Heb.* 11. 27.

Worſhip. They could have no very perfect Notions of his Nature and Providence; nor had they much leiſure for Speculation and Refinement in theſe Subjects. They were all Tillers

any farther Import. Though if this ſhould have yet a more diſtant and extenſive view [as much removed perhaps from the comprehenſion of Mankind in thoſe times, as ſome others, then very obvious ones, may poſſibly be now from us] it anſwers theſe ends for the preſent never the leſs, and is more like all other parts of the Divine Oeconomy, which ſerve for various purpoſes immediate and remote.—But if we admit theſe Uſes, they will make it improper for this Rite to have been inſtituted *before the Fall*, which is another Objection, p. 22. And if they will warrant the ſuppoſition of its being inſtituted at all by God, it muſt be inſtituted with a *merciful Deſign*, and as ſuch every dutiful compliance with it would be conceived in ſome reſpect to better the Condition of the Worſhipper as far as he could carry his thoughts on that Condition, how dark ſoever his Notions might be as to the time and manner of completing it.

Upon the whole, I cannot help concluding it to be more probable in itſelf and more analogous to the general courſe of things that this ſo univerſal a Practiſe of ſacrificing Animals, however odd and unaccountable it may ſeem to be in ſome reſpects at preſent, how much ſoever inferior to ſome modern Notions of the world and its all-perfect Governour, ſhould owe its Origin to ſome Divine Appointment, be propagated every where by primitive Tradition, and afterwards [as in too many other caſes] by a pretended Imitation and Improvement, but a real Miſrepreſentation and Abuſe, receive ſuch gradual Alteration, from the Authors of all Superſtition and Vice, as at

of the Ground or Keepers of Cattle; employed ſufficiently in cultivating and repleniſhing this New World, and through the Curſe brought on it by their forefather forced with him to eat their bread in the ſweat of their brow. We may ſuppoſe the generality of them to have been no better than *Anthropomorphites* in their Conceptions of the Divine Being, as many were found to be long after them in much more knowing Times, [a] and as perhaps a great part of the World yet are, by giving way to their Imagination, notwithſtanding the cleareſt Reve-

length to arrive at that degree of Enormity which this ingenious Writer has ſo well deſcribed. And I ſubmit it to his Candor whether the ſuppoſition of its coming from one who might have farther views in it than could appear at firſt ſight, or be at once accompliſhed, be not as likely to remove his Difficulties, as attributing it wholly to the Invention of Men at a time when it is agreed between us that they were capable of inventing very little; and who, if they could ſee ſo far before them as to ſtrike out ſuch a Form of Worſhip, muſt we may think have likewiſe been appriſed of ſome of the ſame Difficulties, which would always attend it. And laſtly, whenceſoever it did come, whether ſuch a perſwaſion as this Gentleman entertains of its being fundamentally wrong, and in every light ſo glaring an Abſurdity, be not as hard to reconcile with the Belief [which I preſume we are equally agreed in] of God's expreſs acceptance of the ſame on ſome occaſions, his permiſſion of it all along to his diſtinguiſh'd Favourites, and at laſt formally enjoining and eſtabliſhing it

lations and plaineſt Arguments to the contrary. Frequent Apparitions then might be neceſſary to keep up a tolerable ſenſe of Religion among them and ſecure obedience to the Divine Inſtitutions; [b] and that the Almighty did not appear as frequently as was either neceſſary, or fit to anſwer this end cannot be concluded from the ſilence of thoſe very ſhort accounts we have in Sacred Hiſtory, as was obſerv'd before.

Beſides, *Adam* himſelf continued nine hundred and thirty years an eye witneſs of the Power and Providence of God, and could not

it with the minuteſt Circumſtances; and this without any ſuch intimation as is given in other caſes of its being all merely a compliance with ſome of their own Cuſtoms or their Prejudices.

[a] ' *Lactantius* is to prove that God has *Human Paſſions* ' —to prevent being miſunderſtood and to provide a proper ' Subject for theſe Paſſions he contends ſtrongly for God's ' having a *Human Form*; no diſcreditable notion at that time in the Church.' *Warburton*'s *Divine Legation*, B. 3. S. 4. p. 372. add *Locke* on Human Underſtanding, B. 1. c. 4. S. 16. and *Huetii Origeniana*, L. 2. Q. 1. S. 8. p. 30.

[b] Και γαρ εικος εν αρχη τω κοσμω επι πλειον βεβοηθησθαι την ανθρωπων φυσιν, εως, προκοπης γενομενης εις συνεσιν και τας λοιπας αρετας, και την ευρεσιν των τεχνων, δυνηθωσι και καθ' εαυτους ζην, ω χρηζοντες αει επιτροπευοντων και οικονομουντων αυτως μετα παραδοξω επιφανειας των υπηρετουμενων τω τω θεω βουληματι. Orig. cont. Cels. p. 216. Edit. Cant.

but reflect on thoſe remarkable inſtances of both exerted at the beginning of his own Life,[a] and muſt have acquainted the reſt of Mankind with all thoſe Truths relating to the Deity that were implyed in the Creation of Man and his firſt ſituation in the World * as well as his preſent ſtate of Puniſhment and proſpect of a future Redemption, which were exhibited together, and doubtleſs explained to him, upon his Fall. He was all that while a living Monument both of the Juſtice and Mercy of God; of his extreme hatred and abhorence of Sin, as well as his great Love and long ſuffering toward the Sinner. He was very ſenſible how Sin enter'd into the World and could not but appriſe his Children of its Author, and at the ſame time inform them of the Unity of *God* and his Dominion over the *Evil* one, and aſſure them of his being the Supreme Governour and Judge of all. For ſo much, I think, might eaſily be gathered from that Tranſaction in Paradiſe in whatſoever ſenſe we underſtand it; not to mention that the Garden of *Eden*, the great ſcene of this Tranſgreſſion, might perhaps

[a] See *Allix*'s *Reflections*, B. 1. c. 8. *&c.*

* How he was able always to convince the World that he was the firſt Man, ſee *Cumberland de Leg. Patriarch.* p. 409, 410.

ſtill

ſtill be viſible. [b] This would produce a tolerable Idea of the Divine Being and afford ſufficient motives to obey him. And accordingly we find the effects of it in the righteous Family of *Seth*, who began to *call upon the Name of the Lord*,* or as that Text is better render'd in the Margin, to *call themſelves by the Name of the Lord.* [c] They ſoon diſtinguiſhed themſelves from the Poſterity of *Cain*, and for their extraordinary Piety were entitled the People or *Sons of God.* Of them ſometime after ſprang a perſon ſo very eminent for Goodneſs and Devotion as to be exempted from *Adam*'s Sentence and the common lot of his Sons: who after he had walked with God three hundred years and *propheſied* to his Brethren,* and forewarn'd them of the approaching Judgement, was *tranſlated* that he ſhould not ſee Death.† This very remarkable Event muſt make the World about him ſenſible of the good Providence of God inſpecting and rewarding his faithful Servants, and one would think it ſhould induce

[b] *Allix*'s *Reflex.* p. 53. and 62.

* *Gen.* 4. 26.

[c] See *Shuckford*, V. 1. p. 42, *&c. Van Dale Orig. et Progr. Idol.* c. 2. *Stillingfleet Iren.* c. 3. p. 73. 4to.

* *Jude* 14.

† *Heb.* 11. 5. comp. *Eccl^us^.* 44. 14. and Mr. *Arnold* upon Wiſdom, 4. 10.

them to look up to a better ſtate than the preſent, where all ſuch might hope at length to ſee and enjoy their Maker. To *Adam* himſelf, if he was then alive (as the *Samaritan* account makes him to be above forty years after) to *Adam* it muſt be a lively and affecting inſtance of what he might have enjoyed had he kept his Innocence, as well as an earneſt of the promiſed Victory over the Evil one; and a ſtrong ground of confidence that he and the reſt of his Poſterity ſhould not be left entirely in their preſent ſtate, but ſometime or other be reſtored to the favour of their Maker and behold his preſence in Bliſs and Immortality. [a] At the ſame time lived *Lamech* another Prophet, who was contemporary both with *Adam* and *Noah*, and well acquainted with the Counſels of God, as appear'd from his foretelling that that part of the Curſe which related to the Barrenneſs of the Earth would be taken off, as it was, in his

[a] See Bp. *Bull*'s Diſcourſes, V. 1. p. 343. V. 2. p. 585, *&c.* Mr. *Worthington* argues farther that this Tranſlation of *Enoch* 'was moreover an intimation to Mankind that if 'they overcame the Depravity of their Nature as he did, 'they ſhould be delivered from the ill conſequences of it 'as he was; the chiefeſt of which was Death, temporal 'and eternal, both which he avoided:' and this ingenious Author ſuppoſes him to be a Type of many others being able to do the very ſame, *Eſſay* p. 72, *&c.*

Son's

Son's days. [a] At length, when by the unlawful mixture of the two Families of *Cain* and *Seth*, the latter alſo was corrupted, and the whole World became full of *unbounded Luſt* and impurity,* of Rapine and Violence;† when thoſe *Giants* in wickedneſs ‡ had filled the Earth with Tyranny, Injuſtice and Oppreſſion, and the whole race of Men were grown entirely *carnal* || and abandoned; God, whoſe Spirit had been hitherto *ſtriving* with them, was at length obliged even in mercy to themſelves, as well as their Poſterity, to cut them off, after having raiſed up another Prophet, [b] to give them frequent warning of their Fate, and allowed them a hundred and twenty years for Repentance. §

Thus ample proviſion did God make for the Inſtruction and Improvement of the World for the firſt ſixteen hundred years; namely by

[a] *Gen.* 5.29. ſee Bp. *Sherlock*'s *Uſe and Intent.* p. 89, &c.

* *Gen.* 6.2. † *v.* 11. ‡ *v.* 4. || *v.* 3.

[b] *Pet.* 3.19. *Heb.* 11.7. *Noah* the Eighth, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, (2 *Pet.* 2.5.) or as ſome more juſtly render it *the eighth Preacher*. [ſee *Jenkin*, V.1. p.46. and *Pool* in loc. N.4.] For he was neither the Eighth *Perſon* in deſcent from *Adam*, nor does his being *one* of the Eighth Perſons in the Ark ſeem to be a conſtruction either very natural or pertinent. Add *Pearſon on the Creed*, Part 2. p. 115. 2d Edit.

§ *Gen.* 6.3.

frequent *Appearances*, as we have ſeen; by the *Spirit of Prophecy*, which is by ſome ſuppoſed to have been hereditary in the Heads of Families in thoſe times; [a] and by uninterrupted *Tradition:* there being but two Generations from *Adam* to *Noah*; ſo that we cannot imagine that the Knowledge and true Worſhip of God during that time could be entirely loſt in any part of the World. But we are to remember that the World was ſtill but in its ſtate of *Childhood*, which it moſt aptly reſembled in thoſe extraordinary Aids and Supports afforded it; in the repeated inſtances of that paternal care and tenderneſs with which the Creator watched over it: and I have been the more particular in examining from whence it might derive its Notices of God and Religion, and how far theſe could poſſibly extend, in order to obviate ſome Miſtakes which are commonly made in the Hiſtory of thoſe Times, by ſetting out wrong, and ſuppoſing the firſt Man to have been once ſuperior to all his Poſterity [b] both in natural Abilities and actual Knowledge, becauſe more innocent than they; and imagining the primitive Religion more perfect, becauſe it was more naked, plain and ſimple than that in after times;

[a] See *Jurieu Crit. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 34.

[b] Vid. *Gen. Dict.* Art. *Adam*, p. 228, *&c.*

by

by which means we are forced to make the State of the World often go backwards, to riſe and fall again, and be filled with Breaks and Inequalities; inſtead of obſerving that regular, even Progreſs which will appear in all parts of the Divine Oeconomy.

To proceed. After the *Deluge* God is pleaſed to converſe a freſh and make another more clear and extenſive Covenant with Mankind in the perſon of *Noah*, who was a new inſtance both of his Power, Juſtice and Goodneſs, and whoſe Family had been ſufficiently convinced of his ſupreme Dominion over the Earth and Heavens; of his utter abhorrence of Sin, and his determin'd will not to let it go unpuniſhed. Nor could they or their Children for ſome time want any other Argument to enforce Obedience, Fear and Worſhip.[a] The Knowledge of mankind therefore after the Flood muſt for a conſiderable time be better than ever it was before, and it might ſafely be propagated by Tradition, and did not ſtand in need of any farther Revelation. But when by degrees they had corrupted this Tradition in the moſt eſſential parts, eſpecially with relation to the Object of their Worſhip, and inſtead of one ſupreme God had ſet up ſeveral Orders of inferior ones, and worſhip'd all the

[a] See *Allix*, B. 1. c 13.

Hoſt

Hoſt of Heaven, (as they began to do in the time of *Peleg* the fifth from *Noah*) and at the ſame time were uniting under one Head and forming an *univerſal Empire*, and erecting a Monument to preſerve and perpetuate this their Union; in order to prevent their being all corrupted at once God ſaw it neceſſary to *come down*,[a] and diſperſe them into ſeveral diſtinct Colonies by dividing them into ſo many *Languages*, [or cauſing that *Diſcord* amongſt them[b]] which made their future intercourſe impracticable, and thereby render'd it impoſſible for any one ſpecies of Idolatry to be univerſally eſtabliſhed; may gave a conſiderable check to the progreſs of falſe Worſhip in general, which had moſt probably been introduced by the Rulers[c] of thoſe times; and for which reaſon their People then might be driven from them to hinder its being impoſed, as God's own People were afterwards diſperſed every where to cure it. After the *Diſperſion* particular Revelations were in all probability vouchſafed where-

[a] *Gen.* 11. 5. 7. ſee *Le Clerc* upon the place.

[b] *Pſ.* 55. 9. *Le Clerc* ibid. Add 1 *Cor.* 1. 10. and *Vitringa Obſerv. Sacr.* L. 1. c. 9. §. 6, *&c. Shuckford*, B. 3. V. 1. p. 146. or *Huchinſon on the Confuſion of Tongues.*

[c] See *Shuckford*, V. 1. B. 5. p. 353, *&c.* The ſame Author gives a probable *reaſon* for this, V. 2. B. 9. p. 457, *&c.*

ever

ever men were capable of improving by them and diſpoſed to regard them. We find *Peleg* had his Name prophetically given from that *Diſperſion* which was to happen in his days; * and not only his Father *Eber*, but all the Heads of Families mentioned in the eleventh of *Geneſis*, from *Noah* to *Abraham*, are with ſome reaſon ſuppoſed to have had the Spirit of Propheſy on many occaſions. However *Noah* was undoubtedly both Prieſt and Prophet, and living till *Abraham* was near ſixty years old, might well be able to keep up a tolerable ſenſe of Religion in the World, which was then but very thinly inhabited. [a] His religious Son *Shem* likewiſe was living ſo long as *Jacob*'s time, and could not but be a great means of continuing the Faith and Worſhip of the true God among his *Deſcendents*. [b] But notwithſtanding a few righteous men and ſome remains of true Religion, Idolatry with its perpetual attendants

* *Gen.*10.25.

[a] *Gen.* 13.9. v. Part 3. p.108. note [a] and *Newton* Chron. p.185.—6. The *Ark* itſelf, a certain Monument of the Deluge, continued ſeveral Ages after *Abraham*, and preſerv'd the memory of it even among Pagans. v. *Lucian de Dea Syra. Allix Reflex.* p.68. *Joſeph. Ant.* L. 1. c. 3.

[b] Concerning the Notices of Religion in the world about this time, ſee *Allix*, B. 1. c. 14.

Vice

Vice and Superſtition [c] had in a little time ſo far prevailed among the Sons of *Noah*, as to make it highly expedient for God as well to ſhorten the lives of men, [d] as to withdraw his Preſence from the generality, who had made themſelves unfit for ſuch Communication, and to ſingle out ſome particular People to bear his Name and be his more immediate Servants, and thereby preſerve his Worſhip pure in ſome part of the World amidſt the various corruptions that were going to overſpread it. With this view *Abraham* is called, who had been driven out of an Idolatrous Nation, in all probability for oppoſing and refuſing to comply with its Idolatry, [e] and after many remarkable trials of his Faith and Conſtancy admitted to a particular intimacy and *Friendſhip* with his Maker. God enters into a peculiar Covenant with him and

[c] The attendants and effects of Idolatry are well deſcribed by the Author of *Wiſdom*, c. 14. 23.—29. *So that there reigned in all men without exception Blood, Manſlaughter, Theft and Diſſimulation, Corruption, Unfaithfulneſs, Tumults, Perjury.* 25. *Diſquieting of good men, Forgetfulneſs of good turns, defiling of Souls, changing of kind, diſorder in Marriages, Adultery and Shameleſs Uncleanneſs,* 26. add c. 12. 4, 5, 6. v. *Arnold in loc.*

[d] Concerning this great Change in the Divine Oeconomy, ſee Part 3.

[e] *Maim.* M. Nev. p. 421. ſee *Chandler* Vind. O. T. Part 2. p. 474. *Judith* 5. 8. *Shuckford*, V. 1. B. 5. p. 269.

engages

engages to be his preſent Guide, Protector and Defender, and to beſtow not only all temporal Benefits on him and on his Seed, [a] but to make ſome of them the means of conveying a Bleſſing of a higher kind to all the Nations of the Earth, who ſhould in an extraordinary manner be *bleſſed through him*. *Abraham* no doubt was fix'd upon for his ſingular Piety and truſt in God, and entitled to theſe high Privileges by his extraordinary Virtues, for whoſe ſake (or rather for the ſake of encouraging and rewarding of which Virtues) the ſame Privileges were continued to a part of his Poſterity, though far leſs worthy of them. But we cannot think that it was ſo much on his own account that he was thus diſtinguiſhed; or that *for his ſake only* * Faith is ſaid to be imputed to him for Righteouſneſs; but rather for the common Benefit of Mankind was all this done, and in order to make him an inſtrument in the hand of Providence (and a fit one he was) to convey the ſame Faith and Fear of God to all the

[a] That the original Promiſe (*Gen.* 12. 7. 13. 14, 15. 15. 18, *&c.*) was made to *Abraham*'s Seed in general, though the eſpecial Covenant was reſtrained to a part of them, ſee Remarks on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Moral Philoſopher*, p. 89. 90.

* *Rom.* 4. 24.

Nations round him. And accordingly we find him greatly favour'd and diſtinguiſhed among the neighbouring Princes, and *Kings reproved for his ſake*, who are acquainted with his Prophetic Character and deſire his interceſſion with God. ‡ Hiſtory tells us of his converſing on the ſubject of Religion with the moſt learned *Egyptians*, [b] and being very highly eſteemed by them, from whom probably they afterwards derived the Rite of Circumciſion, among other Inſtitutes of Religion. [c] We are informed that his Name was had in the greateſt veneration all over the Eaſt; that the *Magians*, *Sabians*,

‡ *Gen.* 12. 17. and 20. 7.

[b] *Joſephus* L. 1. c. 9. contr. *Apion.* paſſim. *Damaſcen.* in *Euſeb.* Præp. Evang. L. 9. c. 18.

[c] *Shuckford*, B. 5. p. 322, *&c.* and B. 7. p. 132, *&c.* Others derive it from *Joſeph. Univers. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 527. note R. and p. 453. note U. add *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 97. *Grot. Ep.* 327. Others ſuppoſe it introduced by *Iſhmael*, [*Rev. Exam.* V. 2. p. 190¦] or his Poſterity the *Shepherds*, as is made very probable by the Ingenious Author of Remarks on part of the 3d Vol. of the *Moral Philoſopher* p. 59, *&c.*

[d] *Prideaux*, Part 1. B. 4. p. 225. Comp. *Hide de Rel. Vet. Perſ.* c. 2. and 3. and *Univerſ. Hiſt.* paſſim. 'Tis remarkable that the *Lacedemonians* retained the memory of him for above 1600 years, and under their King *Areus* claimed kindred with the *Jews*, as being of the Stock of *Abraham*. 1 *Maccab.* 12. 21, *&c. Joſeph. Ant.* L. 12. 5. [ſee Dr. *Waterland*'s Poſtſcript to *Scrip. Vind.* Part 2. p. 142. or *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 53. and 90. How this might come

Perſians and *Indians* all gloried in him as the great Reformer of their Religion. [d] And as he was let into the various Counſels of the Almighty and taught to reaſon and reflect upon them; as he was fully appriſed of his juſt Judgement in the miraculous overthrow of the five * wicked Cities, with the particular Circumſtances of it, † as well as his moſt gracious intent of providing a Redeemer for all Mankind, and *rejoiced to ſee his Day*, ‡ *and ſaw it*; 'tis very probable that he and his Family would propagate theſe Doctrines, together with their Conſequences, whereſoever they went. [a]

come about, ſee *Stillingfleet Or. S.* B. 3. c. 4. or *Shuckford*, B. 10. p. 51.] nor is it unlikely that from the *Abrahamans*, or Sons of *Abraham*, the *Brachmans* might deſcend and derive their Name. *Newt. Chron.* p. 351. 'Tis likewiſe obſerv'd that the *Perſians* adhered ſo ſtrictly to the Religion of *Abraham* as to keep clear of the moſt groſs Idolatry all along, as is at large proved in the *Univerſal Hiſtory*, V. 2. add *General Dict.* V. 6. p. 343. other Teſtimonies of Heathen Hiſtorians on this point are collected by the Author of *Revelation examined with Candor*, V. 2. p. 217.

* *Wiſd.* 10 6. † *Gen.* 18.

‡. *Joh.* 8. 56. ηγαλλιασατο *geſtiebat* long'd earneſtly. ſee *Warburton*'s ingenious Comment on this Text. *Div. Leg.* V. 2. p. 592, *&c.*

[a] See Dr. *Burnet*'s *Boyle*'s *Lect.* p. 536. Fol. 'God 'called *Abraham* out of his own Country and made him 'travel from place to place, to make him thereby famous 'in

But though the Deity was pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf in a more frequent and familiar manner to *Abraham*, yet were not the reſt of the world quite overlooked. There were no doubt many other ſhining lights and eminent Profeſſors of the true Religion, who like *Lot* in the midſt of *Sodom*, were as eminently preſerv'd and ſupported in it; we ſee *Laban* and *Bethuel* acknowledging the *Lord* ‖ and the former of them favour'd with a Viſion; § nor was the Spirit of Prophecy, or Divine Revelation, wholly confined to *Abraham*, or to his Family. In *Canaan* we meet with *Melchizedeck*, King and Prieſt of the moſt High God; [b] who is acquainted with the Bleſſing promiſed to *Abraham*, and confirms it to him, and to whom the Patriarch himſelf pays Homage. In *Arabia* we find *Job* and his three Friends, all of Regal Dignity, [c] entering into the deepeſt points of

[c] in the world, and to invite men by that means to in-
[c] quire after his Profeſſion, his Hopes, and his Religion'. *Allix Reflex.* B. 2. c. 12. add *Rev. examined*, V. 2. Diſſ. 6. and *Worthington*'s *Eſſay*, p. 125, *&c.*

‖ *Gen.* 24. 31, 50. § *Gen.* 31. 24.

[b] Moſt probably the Patriarch *Shem* himſelf. vid. *Cumberland de Leg. Patriarch.* p. 428, *&c. Bedford Scrip. Chron.* p. 318. The ſame opinion is maintain'd by many other Authors mentioned by *Calmet.* Dict. V. 2. p. 177.

[c] *Tobit* 2. 16. vulg. Lat. — Job inſultabant *Reges.*

Di-

Divinity, and agreed about the Unity, Omnipotence and Spirituality of God, the Juſtice of his Providence, and other Fundamentals of Religion; as alſo mentioning a Divine Inſpiration as no very uncommon thing. * *Eliphaz* had his Viſions and Revelations † as well as *Job*, though in a lower degree; [a] and the latter expreſſes his belief of a *Reſurrection* and a general *Judgement* in much ſtronger and clearer Terms, than are elſewhere to be met with near his time, if according to the Seventy, he was the fifth from *Abraham*, [b] or according to others, contemporary either with him, or *Iſaac*. [c] Though in truth it is not very eaſy to ſettle either the Date of that piece, or the Import of ſeveral expreſſions in it. Some look upon it as a *Jewiſh* Parable or allegorical Drama, and bring it down as low as the Captivity, nor are they without their reaſons. [d] However, all ſeem

* *Gen.* 32. 8. 33. 15. † c. 4. 12, 15, 16.

[a] See *Patrick* Append. to Paraphr. on *Job*. p. 59.

‡ C. 19.

[b] See *Calmet*'s Dictionary.

[c] *Jurieu. Crit. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 18. *Shuckford*, B. 7. p. 136. *&c. Univerſ. Hiſt.* p. 482. *Selden de Jur. Nat.* &c. L. 7. c. 11.

[d] See ſome of them in the *Five Letters* on Inſpiration, p. 99. and *Le Clerc* on *Job*. 1, 6. 23, 12. 26, 12. 38, 3. 42, 7. But this is put beyond all doubt by the incompa-

to agree that whoever was the Author of it, it is built upon a real Character, and that decorum kept up as to ſuit moſt of the Notions in it to the Patriarchal Times.

To proceed: In *Chaldea* we meet with *Balaam* a true Prophet, [e] yet one who from his own perſonal merit had no particular pretenſions to the Word of God, ſince he ſo notoriouſly loved and followed *the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs*, and at length juſtly periſhed among the idolatrous *Midianites*, * having taught them to ſeduce and corrupt thoſe whom he knew to be the choſen People of God. † Conſidering, I ſay, the Character of this Perſon,

rable Author of *Div. Leg.* B. 6. S. 2. p. 543, *&c.* who has given us a beautiful account of this whole book and cleared up all the Difficulties in it which uſed ſo much to perplex Interpreters, and particularly makes it appear that the words in Queſtion can relate only to a temporal Deliverance, nor indeed would the other ſenſe of them well agree with any of the times which have been fix'd on for the writing of this Book.

[e] See *Patrick* Append. to Paraphr. on *Job.* p. 60.

* *Numb.* 31. 8.

† *Numb.* 24. 9. and 31. 16. *Mic.* 6. 5. *Rev.* 2. 14.

[f] Whatever might have been his behaviour before, it was certainly very bad in the whole of this affair, during which he had the fulleſt Revelations, and yet was always either directly diſobeying or endeavouring to defeat the intent of them, as may be ſeen in Bp. *Butler*'s excellent Sermon on that ſubject, and Dr. *Shuckford*'s Connection.

he ſeems to have had no particular Title to the Gift of Prophecy, [f] and therefore we may ſuppoſe that in thoſe days it was not ſo uncommon a favour, but might be conferred on many others likewiſe in other parts of the world, [g] whoſe Hiſtory is not delivered down to us: and upon the whole, it ſeems probable that as *in every Nation thoſe who feared God and worked Righteouſneſs were accepted of him*, * ſo he was pleaſed alſo to manifeſt himſelf where-ever men were diſpoſed to make a proper uſe of that Manifeſtation, and in ſuch manner and degree as would beſt anſwer the ends of his good Providence, and moſt effectually promote the

* *Acts* 10. 35.

nection. B. 12. p. 314, *&c.* As to the particular *manner* of theſe Revelations we may I think ſuppoſe them to have been all made in Viſion, Dream or *Trance* [as our Tranſlators have interpreted one hereafter mentioned] though from the narration it is as difficult here as in ſome other parts of Scripture to diſtinguiſh between real Fact in the moſt literal ſenſe, and viſionary, ſymbolical Repreſentations, ſuch as occur in *Job*, c. 1. v. 6, - 12. 1 *Kings*, c. 22. v. 19. - 23, *&c.* *Zechariah* 1. 2. and perhaps *Gen.* 32. 2, 24. vid. *Theodoret.* That of the *Angel* meeting *Balaam* in the way ſeems to be thus explained by himſelf. *Numb.* 24. 3, 4. (when rightly rendered) where he alludes to the very Circumſtance of his eyes being ſhut for ſome time c. 22. 31. Nor does it ſeem very probable that he who was ſaid to be in the retinue of the Princes of *Moab.*

Intereſt of Religion. Not to inſiſt upon the numberleſs Traditions of ſupernatural appearances and the common Belief of them all over the world;[h] which notion can hardly be ſuppoſed to have ariſen at firſt without foundation, though numberleſs Impoſtures (which yet are Imitations of ſomething real) have indeed rendered all reports of that kind for theſe many Ages very ſuſpicious.

But to proceed. When for the reaſons abovementioned, and perhaps many others, it had pleaſed God to adopt *Abraham* and part of his Poſterity in a peculiar manner and to eſtabliſh his Covenant with them, * we find all poſſible care and condeſcenſion uſed to train them up by degrees in ſuitable notions of their Creator; a frequent Correſpondence held with them,

Numb. 22. 21. ſhould at any time be ſo far ſeparated from them in the way as to give room for ſuch a remarkable Tranſaction without the knowledge of any of them, as by the account it appears to be. 'Ita dico, in negotio '*Bileami*, totum illud quod in via ei contigiſſe dicitur, 'et quomodo aſina loquuta fuerit, in viſione Prophetică 'factum eſſe, quia in fine Hiſtoriæ explicatur quod *Angelus* '*Dei* loquutus fuerit.' *Maimon.* Mor. *Nevoch.* P. 2. c. 42. To the ſame purpoſe *R. Levi Ben Gerſom.* and *Philo* ſeems to be of the ſame opinion, by his omiſſion of this Circumſtance, as is obſerved by Dr. *Shuckford*, B. 12. p. 315. Add *Memoirs of Lit.* for *April* 1710. p. 14, &c. *Leibnitz* en-

and freſh Promiſes daily given to ſtrengthen and confirm their Faith, to fix and preſerve their Dependence on the God of Heaven. He reveles himſelf to *Iſaac* and *Rebecca* and foretells the Condition of their two Sons, † renews the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, ‡ and bleſſes his ſon *Iſaac*, miraculouſly increaſes his ſubſtance, and ſoon makes him the envy of the neighbouring Princes. ‖ He converſes in the ſame manner with *Jacob* and repeats the ſame Promiſe; § gives him the right of Primogeniture, and engages to be with him and keep him in all places whither he ſhould go.* This he confirms by many extraordinary Bleſſings and frequent appearances, † vouchſafing to talk with him face to face, ‡ to beſtow all kinds of Riches on him, and ſtrike the Terror

endeavours to prove the ſame in his Hiſtory of *Balaam*. *Gen. Dict.* v. 6. p. 678. Which I think is pretty clear in his caſe, though ſome of thoſe others abovementioned may perhaps belong to that Species of Revelation by *Action* which Mr. *Warburton* explains at large, *Div. Leg.* B. 4. S. 4. and B. 6. S. 5.

[g] See *Judg.* 7. 13, *&c.* and Notes below.

[h] See *Patrick* on *Numb.* 22. 9. Append. to *Job.* 60, *&c.* *Huet. Quæſt. Alnetan.* c. 2. N. 1. 2. *Shuckford*, B. 1. p. 47.

* *Rom.* 9. 5. † *Gen.* 25. 22, 23. ‡ *Gen.* 26. 24.
‖ *Gen.* 12. 13, 14. § *Gen.* 28. 13, 14. * *v.* 15.
† *Gen.* 32. 1. 35. 1,-9. ‡ c. 32. 29.

of him into all the Cities round about.* And yet we find all this little enough to keep up even in *Jacob* a tolerable ſenſe of Duty and Dependence on his God: (as is obſerved by an ingenious writer.[a]) After the firſt Viſion he is ſurpriſed and heſitates, and ſeems to make a kind of ſtipulation with his Maker. *If*, ſays he, *God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, ſo that I come again to my Father's Houſe in peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God:* † that is, if he will preſerve and proſper me in my undertakings, he ſhall be my God rather than any other, and upon that Condition only. And it appears not to have been till after many ſuch Revelations, Bleſſings and Deliverances, and being reminded of this Promiſe, ‡ that he ſet himſelf in earneſt to reform the Religion of his own Family by driving out all ſtrange Gods. ‖ *Then* Jacob *ſaid unto his Houſehold and to all that were with him, Put away the ſtrange Gods that are among you and be clean, and change your Garments, and let us ariſe and go up to* Bethel, *and I will make there an Altar unto God who anſwered me*

* *Gen.* 35. 5.

[a] *Welſted. Scheme of Providence*, p. 51, *&c.*

† *Gen.* 28. 21, 22. ‡ c. 35. 1. ‖ c. 35. 2, 3.

in the day of my diſtreſs, and was with me in the way which I went.[b]

Thus was God obliged to treat even with the *Patriarchs* themſelves by way of poſitive *Covenant* and expreſs Compact; to promiſe to be their God if they would be his People; to give them a portion of preſent temporal Bleſſings as introductory to and an earneſt of future ſpiritual ones, and engage them in his ſervice by immediate Rewards, till they could be led on to higher views, and were prepared by the bringing in of a better Hope to draw nigh unto him. And we may obſerve what care was always taken to ſuit the ſeveral Diſpenſations to the ſtate of the World, and introduce each as ſoon as it was wanted, and in ſuch a way as was moſt neceſſary to correct Diſorders and reform Abuſes as they roſe, and thereby keep up a Face of Religion and gradually increaſe the Subſtance of it: in the ſame manner as Providence always took care to impart to Mankind ſo much Knowledge of the World,

[b] The Idolatry here mentioned may perhaps be thought chiefly to relate to the *Shechemite* Women in *Jacob*'s Houſehold, *Gen.* 34. 29. See *Shuckford*, B. 7. p. 164. However, that he himſelf had yet but very imperfect notions of the Deity, particularly of his *Omnipreſence*, is obſerved by *Le Clerc* on *Gen.* 28. 16. and to the ſame purpoſe *Cyrill. Alex.* L. 4. p. 115. there cited.

the ways of cultivating it and Arts of living, as was requiſite to make Life a Bleſſing to them; though their Knowledge of both kinds was neither of ſo refined a Nature nor ſo high a degree as it muſt grow to by the experience and Improvements of after Ages. Mankind were ſcarcely got out of their *Childhood* yet, with regard to what may be called the *Theory* of *Religion*; and notwithſtanding there might always be ſome extraordinary Perſons who had a more enlarged proſpect of things and entertained more worthy ſentiments of the Divine Providence, ſuch as *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham* and the like; yet theſe were far ſuperior to the Times in which they lived, and we have reaſon to think that the generality, both in this and ſome later Ages, extended their Views no farther than the preſent Life and its Conveniences: [a] and though from the confuſed Remains of ancient Tradition they acknowledged ſome Power above them, and frequently applied thither for direction in their Affairs; yet

[a] This ſeems to have been the caſe even with *Abraham* himſelf for ſome time, who upon having this extraordinary promiſe made to him by God in a Viſion, *Gen.* 15. 1. *I am thy ſhield and thy exceeding great Reward*; riſes no higher in his anſwer than only to requeſt an heir for his Subſtance. *v.* 2. 3. *And Abram ſaid, Lord God, what will*

it was in the petty Affairs of this World only, and their Belief and Worſhip were accordingly. How many of theſe Superiour Powers there might be, or how far their Influence might reach they knew not: uncertain whether there was one ſupreme Governour of the whole World, or many coordinate Powers preſiding over each Country * or Climate or particular Place; † Gods of the *Hills* and of the *Valleys*, as they were termed in after times. ‡ They thought the more of theſe they could engage in their Intereſt the better, and therefore wherever they came, like the *Samaritans*, they ſought the manner of *the God of the Land*, and ſerved him together with their own Gods. ‖ Thus was the World running apace into Idolatry, and ready to loſe the very notion of the true God and his Worſhip, had he not been pleaſed to interpoſe and take effectual care to preſerve them in ſome one Nation, to be kept apart from the common Contagion, and made as it were the Repoſitary of true Religion

wilt thou give me ſeeing I go childleſs, and the Steward of my houſe is this Eliezer of Damaſcus? And Abram ſaid, Behold, to me thou haſt given no ſeed; and lo, one born in my houſe is mine heir.

* 2 *Kings* 18. 34, 35. † See *Numb.* 23. 13, 27.

‡ 1 *Kings* 20. 23. 28. vid. *Calmet.* ‖ 2 *Kings* 17. 33.

and

and a Channel to convey it to the reſt of Mankind as ſoon and in as high a degree as they ſhould become capable of receiving it. To this purpoſe he makes way for the removal of *Jacob* and his Family to one of the moſt improved and poliſh'd parts of the World at that time, and introduces them into it in ſo advantageous a manner as to give them opportunity of imparting ſomewhat of the true Religion with advantage to the moſt conſiderable Families in it, and without any danger of ſharing their Corruptions. They are placed by themſelves upon the Borders of *Egypt*, were they multiply exceedingly, yet by their very occupation * are ſtill kept a ſeparate People, and afterwards rendered more averſe to the Manners and Religion of their Neighbours by a long and a ſevere Oppreſſion. Which though it might at firſt perhaps have chiefly been occaſioned by their Oppoſition to Idolatry, † yet became very neceſſary both to keep up that Oppoſition, and to inure them to Reſtraint and Government; and that it might have the effects intended, but not proceed ſo far as to reduce them to an entire ſubjection and conformity to that more potent Nation, through a deſpair of

* See *Gen.* 46. 33, 34.

† See Mr. *Chandler* Vind. of O. T. p. 487.

any

any Deliverance, the preciſe time of this their Trial was foretold to *Abraham* * and as ſoon as it had been accompliſhed, and they had cryed for help to their God, † they are brought back in as wonderful a way as they had been ſent thither; which alſo was foretold to *Jacob*, ‡ and repeated by *Joſeph*, ‖ all the Circumſtances whereof are at large related in their Hiſtory: And, I muſt add, with all thoſe Characters of Truth and Conſiſtency which might have been ſhewn (were this a place for it) to receive new confirmation from every ſuch attempt to burleſque and expoſe it as is made by a late profligate Writer. [a] The God of *Iſrael* having at length magnified himſelf over the *Egyptians* and their Gods, [b] by a ſeries of the moſt aſtoniſhing Miracles, and reſcued his People from them in ſuch a manner as muſt ſtrike the utmoſt ſurpriſe and terror into the whole Land, and ſpread his name much farther by means of the many Strangers that uſed to travel thither [c] in order to be acquainted with the Hiſtory of that famous

* *Acts* 7. 6. † *Exod.* 2. 23. ‡ *Gen.* 46. 4. and 48. 21.
‖ *Gen.* 50. 24, 25.
[a] *Moral Philoſopher.* Introd. to v. 3.
[b] *Exod.* 12. 12. *Numb.* 33. 4. 2 *Sam.* 7. 23.
[c] See the notes below, with Mr. *Chandler*'s Vind. of the Hiſt. of the O. T. Part 2. p. 464. *&c.* and p. 499.

Nation,

Nation, from whom the greateſt part of the world derived their Policy and Religion: [d] having thus, I ſay, made his Name great among the Heathen, as well as work'd ſo conſpicuous a Deliverance for his choſen People as might, one would think, have been ſufficient to engage them for ever in his ſervice, he proceeds to inſtruct and exerciſe them for ſome time in the Wilderneſs; he exhorts and intreats them to their Duty, and warns them againſt all the Vices of the People round about; gives them Statutes and Judgements more righteous * than thoſe of any other Nation, and ſuch as were to be a model to the reſt of the world; [e] ſends his *Angel before them to keep them in the way*, † takes upon himſelf the civil Government of them, [f] and by his preſence guides, guards, directs them in all their undertakings. He conducts them through the neighbouring Nations with repeated Signs and Wonders, [a] and continues

[d] Vid. *Diod. Sic.* L. 1. *Herodot.* L. 2. c. 43, &c.

* *Nehem.* 9. 13.

[e] V. *Joſeph.* contr. *Ap. Selden de Jur. Gent.* &c. paſſim.

† *Exod.* 23. 20.

[f] The Neceſſity for this is well explain'd by Mr. *Warburton. Div. Leg.* B. 5. S. 2. p. 366.—374, &c.

[a] Numb. 14. 14. *They have heard that thou, Lord, art among this People, that thou, Lord, art ſeen face to face, and that thy Cloud ſtandeth over them, and that thou goeſt before them by day time in a Pillar of a Cloud, and in a Pillar of*

to try and diſcipline them till they were at length tolerably well attach'd to his Government and eſtabliſh'd in his worſhip; till they were fit to poſſeſs the promis'd Land, and till the preſent Inhabitants were ripe for Deſtruction. * At their entrance into it he gives them more ſuch Ordinances [b] both of a ceremonial and moral kind as were beſt ſuited to their Temper and Circumſtances, and adapted every way to prevent the Dangers and correct the Irregularities which they were conſtantly liable to,[c]

of Fire by night; v. 15. — *The Nations have heard the fame of thee.* add *Deut.* 2. 25. *Joſh.* 2. 10. 1 *Sam.* 4. 8. 6. 6. which places, by the bye, furniſh us with an Anſwer to that Objection of the *Moral Philoſopher*, V. 3. p. 183. that 'had 'God given any ſuch — Authority to the *Iſraelites* as is 'hereafter mention'd — he would have let the People of '*Paleſtine* know it, and in ſome authentic way or other 'aſſured them, that he had given away their Country to 'Strangers and Foreigners; and that if they did not leave 'the Land and give up all their natural lawful Poſſeſſions, 'Rights and Properties peaceably and without oppoſition, 'they muſt be all cut to pieces, Men, Women, and 'Children': though this was not the truth of the caſe, of which more below.

* *Gen.* 15. 16.

[b] *Deut.* 1. 3. 5. 27. 31. *Nehem.* 9. 14.

[c] See Dr. *Burnet*'s *Boyle*'s *Lect.* p. 541. Fol. and the excellent Author of *Div. Leg.* V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. 'It ſeems 'not to have been God's intention at firſt to lay upon 'them ſuch numbers of Ceremonies; for it was only after 'the

as well as to prefigure [d] and by degrees prepare them for a more perfect Diſpenſation under the *Meſſiah*. The moral part breath'd nothing but Equity and Benevolence; it diſſwaded them from all kinds of Cruelty and Oppreſſion by reminding them of their late heavy Sufferings, and inculcated the greateſt Humanity both toward each other, toward Strangers, Servants, Enemies, and even the Beaſts of the field. [e] The Ceremonial parts were ſolemn and ſplendid, [f] apt to engage and fix the attention of a People whoſe heart was *groſs*; fitted to inſpire

[c] the commiſſion of the Sin of the Golden Calf, that God [c] laid on them that heavy and troubleſome yoak, on pur- [c] poſe to employ all their time and ſo keep them from [c] falling into Idolatry again'. *Allix Reflex.* p. 203. Comp. *Spencer de Leg. Heb.* L. 1. c. 4. S. 4. *Burnet de Fid. et Off.* p. 17. from *Jer.* 7. 22. 23. [on the other ſide ſee *Shuckford*, V. 3. p. 151.] If this be a true account of the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution, then though it really was, what it is term'd, a *Yoke of Bondage*, yet nevertheleſs it might well be impoſed by God himſelf, as being the fitteſt thing for the People to whom, and the times in which it was deliver'd, and conſequently not unworthy of having God for its Author, as a looſe modern Writer wou'd inſinuate, *Moral Philoſopher*, V. 1. p. 51, *&c.*

[d] See Dr. *Burnett. Boyle's Lect.* Fol. 547. or Dr. *Berriman*, Serm. 23.

[e] *Exod.* 22. 21. - 27. and 23. 5, 6, 9, - 12. *Deut.* 5. 14. 10. 18. 14. 21. 16. 11. and 22. 1. - 4. 6, 7. 23. 7. 24. 10, *&c.* 25. 1. - 4. 26. 12. 27. 19. *Lev.* 14. 9, 10. 19. 23. - 37. and 25.

them with an awful Reverence, and withdraw their Affections from the Pomp and Pageantry of Idol Worſhip, which had ſo very ſurpriſingly bewitch'd the world about that time. It was fill'd with operoſe, magnificent Rites to keep them duly employ'd and attach'd to it, and ſo far mix'd and incorporated with their civil Polity that the ſame things were Duties of Religion and Acts of State, and the Service of God became the conſtant Buſineſs as well as Entertainment of their Lives; and ſerv'd them inſtead of all other Entertainments. [a] Nor was

35.-38. ſee *Univ. Hiſt.* p.675. and 685. *Leland*'s Anſw. to *Chriſtianity as old* &c. V. 2. p.447 *&c.* *Le Clerc* on *Gen.*8. 9. 10. *Philo. de Charitate. Joſeph.* contr. *Ap.* L. 2.

[f] See Mr. *Welſted*'s Scheme of Prov. p. 70, *&c.* or Agreement of Cuſtoms between the *Eaſt-Indians* and *Jews*, Art. 3. p.23.

[a] See *Univerſal Hiſt.* p.694. and *Welſted*, p.72, *&c.* or *Edwards*'s *Survey*, V. 1. p.242, 255, *&c.* or *Limborch Amic. Collat.* p. 317. We may add, that the Ceremonial part itſelf might have a moral view, repreſenting ſeveral Duties to them in that emblematical and Parabolic way which was well known and commonly made uſe of in thoſe times. See Inſtances in Dr. *Burnet Boyle*'s *Lect.* p. 542. Fol. Other Rites were inſtituted in *Commemoration* of great and ſignal Events, extraordinary acts of Providence towards their Nation; the keeping up a conſtant Remembrance of which could not but be of great uſe for preſerving the Love and Worſhip of God amongſt them, awakening their Gratitude and engaging their dutiful

this Inſtitution wholly confined to the *Jews*. The Law itſelf was given to Strangers, [b] and thoſe that accompanied them from *Egypt*; the *Covenant* was made with all the *Gentiles* that ſhould hereafter become Proſelytes to their Religion; [c] and ſufficient care was taken to communicate it to them, as we ſhall ſee preſently. And though the Children of *Iſrael* were to have no Commerce with the *Seven Nations*, but were commanded to deſtroy them and poſſeſs themſelves of their Country on their refuſing to ſubmit to their terms, and rejecting offers of Peace: [d] yet to prevent their imagining themſelves the only Favourites of Heaven, and learning to deſpiſe and hate the reſt of Mankind (as they were but too apt to do, and which to a People under their circumſtances was in

ful Obedience. *Leland*'s *Div. Auth. of the O. and N. T.* aſſerted againſt the *Moral Philoſopher*, p. 50. Nor were the public *Feaſts*, in which they were all obliged to meet at one place, of leſs uſe to them, by keeping them united together in one Body Politic. ſee *Le Clerc* on *Exod.* 23.14.

[b] *Deut.* 29. 11. 31. 12. *Joſh.* 8. 33. 35. *Exod.* 12. 19. 49.

[c] *Deut.* 29. 14, 15. *Neither with you only do I make this Covenant and this Oath; but with him that ſtandeth here with us this day before the Lord, and alſo with him that is not here with us this day.* ſee *Lev.* 24. 22. and *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 60-65. or *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 130.

[d] *Deut.* 20. 10, *&c. Joſh.* 2. 12. and 11. 19, 20. and 16. 10. and 17. 13. ſee *Univ. Hiſt.* p. 531. 532. Note I. *Ed-*

ſome meaſure unavoidable) they were told at the ſame time that it was for the incorrigible wickedneſs of thoſe Nations [e] (who of all others had been favour'd with the greateſt means of information, *viz.* from the Examples of ſo many eminent men placed amongſt them, and from the Judgements of God ſo remarkably ſet before them.[f]) that the Lord had driven them out, as he would do *them* alſo if they followed their ſteps: * that if any of theſe remain'd long unſubdued they would infallibly prove a ſnare to them, † and that therefore as well for their own ſecurity, as in execution of the Divine Vengeance, they were obliged to extirpate them, at leaſt the preſent Generation; [g] or to deſtroy their *National Polity*; [h] and at the ſame time were ſufficiently warn'd to avoid their Crimes. They were likewiſe often reminded of their

Edwards's Survey, p. 355, *&c.* *Patrick* on *Ex.* 23. 32. *Shuckford*'s *Connection*, V. 3. B. 12. p. 433, *&c.* *Selden de Jur. N.* L. 6. c. 14.

[e] *Lev.* 18. 24, 25. and 20. 23. ſee *Leland* againſt *Chriſtianity as old* &c. V. 2. p. 429, *&c.*

[f] See *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 56, 57. and 77. 78.

* *Deut.* 8. 19, 20. † *Ex.* 34. 12. *Joſh.* 23. 13.

[g] *Joſh.* 16. 10. *Judg.* 1. 25. 28. 35. 1 *Kings* 9. 20, 21. 2 *Sam.* 11. 12. 2 *Chron.* 8. 7, 8. ſee *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 71, 72.

[h] See Dr. *Sykes*'s Connexion of Nat. and Rev. Rel. c. 13. p. 332, *&c.*

own Preverſeneſs and Ingratitude, * and aſſured that it was not for their own ſakes that they were thus diſtinguiſh'd, for they had always been a ſtiffnecked and rebellious People; † but in regard to the Promiſe made to their Forefathers, and on account of the ſuperior Wickedneſs of theſe Nations; ‡ [b] that the great intent of God was to raiſe up and ſeparate a People which ſhould manifeſt his Power to the Heathen, and make his Name known throughout the earth; * which were to be a *Kingdom of Prieſts*, † Preachers of Righteouſneſs and Publiſhers of true Religion all over the World: [c] that this deſign had taken place before they were born, and would be carried on either by

* *Deut.* 9. † *ib.* 9. 6, 7 *&c.* ‡ *ib.* 5.

[b] That this was ſuch as juſtly deſerv'd exemplary puniſhment from the ſupreme Governour of the World, and that it might with equal Juſtice be inflicted by ſuch perſons as receiv'd an expreſs, clear commiſſion from him for that purpoſe, is ſhewn at large in Mr. *Lowman*'s diſſertation on the Civil Government of the *Hebrews*, c. 1. p. 13, *&c.* and c. 12. p. 221, *&c.* or *S. Browne*, p. 366. *&c.* Concerning the great Propriety of puniſhing them by the Sword of the *Iſraelites*, rather than any other way, both for the better Admonition of the *Iſraelites* themſelves and of their Heathen Neighbours, and how much the credit of the Gods of every Nation depended on the Fate of War.

* *Ezek.* 36. 22, 23.

† *Ex.* 19. 6.

their Obedience or their Diſobedience, who were to be Examples to all others both of the Goodneſs and Severity of God. ‡ And accordingly in the remainder of their Hiſtory, both under their *Judges* and *Kings*, we find them frequently rebelling, and as frequently puniſh'd for it; as ſoon as they repent, they are reſtored; when they relapſe they are again chaſtiſed; [d] all along alternately ſinning and ſuffering, immediate and viſible Judgements attending each revolt, either Oppreſſion in their own, or Slavery in foreign Countries, till the laſt great Captivity in *Babylon* ſeems to have quite cured them of their favourite predominant Vice *Idolatry*, to which they had been before ſo unaccountably

War, ſee *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 72. *Lowman*, ib. p. 228, &c. *Univers. Hiſt.* p. 893. Note T. *ad fin. Jackſon*'s Remarks on *Chriſtianity as old* &c. p. 51. many inſtances of this occur as low as *Conſtantine*, to which purpoſe we have a remarkable Speech of *Licinius* in *Euſeb.* de Vit. Conſt. c. 5. To which we may add, that as the People in thoſe times did not in the leaſt diſpute the Reality of each others Deities, no kind of Miracles but ſuch as imply'd ſuperior Power could induce any of them to quit their own for other Objects of religious Worſhip. comp. 1 *Kings* 20. 23.-28. 2 *Kings* 18. 34, &c.

[c] See Dr. *Waterland*'s firſt Charge, p. 50, &c.

‡ *Deut.* 30. &c. *Rom.* 11. 22.

[d] *Judg.* 3. 8. 12, 42. 6. 1. 13. 1. 1 *Sam.* 12. 9, 10, &c.

addicted.[e] But all this while the reſt of the world reap almoſt the ſame Benefit by them, whether they keep their Law and proſper, or diſobey it and are in diſtreſs. One would naturally ſuppoſe that they muſt partake of the Improvements of the *Jews* Religion in ſome degree, as well as theſe partook of their Corruptions; and this appears to be the caſe in fact; and as it has been obſerv'd of *Greece*, that when it was ſubdued by the *Romans*, itſelf ſubdued

[e] *Le Clerc* attempts to give ſome account of this in his Note on 2 *Kings* 21. 11. 'I can account for it (ſays an 'ingenious Writer *) upon no other conſideration, but 'that of the exceeding great Temptations there are in all 'Religions that are a mere mixture of *Civil Policy* and '*Prieſt-Craft*, dreſs'd up with all the Artifices of exter-'nal Pomp, Splendor and Amuſement, and made agree-'able to the corrupt and vicious Inclinations of Men. 'Such no doubt was the *Heathen Worſhip*, to which that 'of the *Golden Calf* bore too near a reſemblance both in 'its Original and Progreſs. And when we turn our 'thoughts to thoſe Ages and Nations of the World that 'are call'd *Chriſtian* [and ſuppoſed to be under far hap-'pier advantages of Light and Knowledge than ever the '*Jewiſh* Church was] and obſerve to what extravagances 'both of Notions and Practiſes, the *Romiſh Communion* 'hath for ſo long a time, and by the like means influenc'd 'the Majority of the Nations around, it will I conceive 'much abate the wonder ariſing from this matter conſi-'der'd in relation to the Church of *Iſrael*.' The parallel in-

* *Pyle* Pref. to *Paraph. on the O. T.* Vol. 4.

its Conquerors, ſoften'd their ſavage Temper and refined their Manners; and afterwards of the *Romans* themſelves, that wherever they conquer'd, they civilized the World: ſo may it with much greater juſtice be ſaid of the *Jews* that they improved and reform'd the Religion of every People who were either brought under ſubjection to them, or into whoſe hands they fell: who were witneſſes of the Power and Juſtice of their God, either in

inſtance abovemention'd affords likewiſe a good Illuſtration of the *Degree* of their Corruption. For that this Crime of the *Iſraelites* did not conſiſt in their abſolute Rejection of the true God, but only in joining the Worſhip of other Gods, and taking them into Communion with him, is made plain by another able Writer. 'So 'ſtrong was this univerſal Prejudice of *Intercommunity* 'that all the Proviſions of the Law could not keep thoſe 'People from running into the Error. For their frequent 'Defections into Idolatry till after the *Babyloniſh* Capti-'vity, was no other than the joining foreign Worſhip to 'that of the God of *Iſrael*. It is a vulgar Error to imagine 'they conſiſted in renouncing the Religion deliver'd to 'them by *Moſes*, as a falſe one; they all along held it 'to be true; but deluded by the Prejudice of this *Inter-'community*, they were apt to regard the God of *Iſrael* 'only as a local, tutelary Deity, this we ſhall ſhew at 'large hereafter.' *Divine Legation*, B. 2. S. 6. p. 277. This he has done effectually in B. 5. S. 2. See alſo *Jurieu* Crit. Hiſt. V. 2. Part 3. c. 9. and *Mede*'s Apoſtacy of latter times, c. 10. p. 651.

diſtinguiſhing them by rewards for their adhering to him, or as remarkably puniſhing them for deſerting him; and who ſeem to be well acquainted with the Intent of theſe his diſpenſations,[a] eſpecially when they were made the Inſtruments thereof.[b] Thus by the various Revolutions in their Government and frequent change of their Condition, they ſpread the Knowledge of their Hiſtory and Religion far and near; more eſpecially by the total Diſperſion of the Ten Tribes and the great Captivity of *Judah* under the *Aſſyrians* and *Babylonians*; when by their cleaving more ſtedfaſtly to God

[a] This may be gather'd from the caſe of the Men of *Jericho* in particular who were fully inform'd of the ſeveral Miracles work'd in favour of the *Iſraelites*. *Joſh.* 2.9,10. and who muſt have had ſufficient warning of God's deſign therein either from common Fame, or more probably, by expreſs Revelation, for deſpiſing of which they are term'd *diſobedient* by St. *Peter* 1.3.20. comp. *Heb.*11.31. See *Shuckford*, V.3. B.12. p.403, *&c.* And that the ſame thing might be done afterwards in many other Inſtances [as in the following Note] by their own Prophets, who were ſent to the Nations on that very account, is no leſs probable; as may be ſeen in the Notes a little below, which gives a farther anſwer to the *Moral Philoſopher*'s Objection mention'd p.96. N.a.

[b] Jer. 50.7. *All that found them have devoured them, and their Adverſaries ſaid we offend not becauſe they have ſinned againſt the Lord, the habitation of Juſtice, even the Lord, the hope of their Fathers. The Lord thy God,* (ſays *Ne-*

and refuſing to comply with the Idolatrous Worſhip of the Empire, they were diſtinguiſh'd by many extraordinary Interpoſitions of Providence, and had ſeveral Royal Proclamations and public Decrees made in their favour, which bore teſtimony to the ſupreme Power, Wiſdom and Juſtice of their *God*; as in the ſucceſſive Reigns of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Nabonadius* or *Belſhazzar*, and *Darius* the *Mede*; as alſo of *Cyrus*, *Cambyſes* or *Ahaſuerus*, *Darius Hyſtaſpis*, *Xerxes*, *Ahaſuerus* the ſecond, or *Artaxerxes*, [a] many of which Princes found themſelves deſcribed before in the *Jewiſh* Prophecies, ſome of them

Nebuzar-adon to *Jeremiah*) *hath pronounced this Evil upon this place. Now the Lord hath brought it and done according as he hath ſaid, becauſe ye have ſinned againſt the Lord and have not obeyed his Voice, therefore this thing is come upon you.* Jer. 40. 2, 3. *Am I now come up without the Lord againſt this Place to deſtroy it? The Lord ſaid to me, go up againſt this Land to deſtroy it*, ſays *Rab-ſhakeh.* 2 *Kings* 18. 25. *Iſaiah* 36. 10. and to the ſame purpoſe *Pharaoh-Necho* 2 *Chron.* 35. 21. which ſeems to be the moſt probable ſenſe of both theſe places notwithſtanding Dr. *Prideaux*'s Objections, V. 1. p. 24, and 54. 8 edit. ſee *Le Clerc* on 2 *Kings* 18. 22. and 2. *Chron.* ſupra. comp. *Judith* 5. 17, *&c.*

[a] *Dan.* 3. 28. 4. 1, 2, *&c.* 6. 25, *&c.* 2 *Chron.* 36. 23. 1 *Eſdras* 1. 27. 2. 3. 8. 8, *&c.* *Ezra.* 1. 3. 6. 9. 6. 12. 7. 13. *Nehem.* 2. 7, *&c.* *Eſther.* 9. 32. and 10. Conf. *Joſeph.* contr. Ap. L. 1. et Ant. L. 11. c. 1. et 5. add *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 2. p. 208. Note. M.

very expreſſly, one by name. After theſe *Alexander* comes to *Jeruſalem*, conſults the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and offers Sacrifice to the moſt High, [b] and many of the *Jews* liſt in his Troops. [c] After his death *Ptolemy* making himſelf maſter of *Judea* carries above a hundred thouſand *Jews* into *Egypt*, diſperſes them through every Province, employs the chief of them in his Army and Garriſons, plants great numbers in *Cyrene* and *Libya*, [d] and gives many more extraordinary Privileges in *Alexandria*. [e] His Son *Philadelphus* procured a Tranſlation of their Law into *Greek*, the then moſt univerſal Language, which was, as it were, a new Publication of their Religion, [f] and for which the *Alexandrian Jews* formerly kept a ſolemn day of rejoicing: [g] (though afterwards it was turn'd into a Faſt, when they found what great uſe

[b] *Joſephus*, L. 11. c. 8. *Prideaux*, Part 1. B. 7. p. 487. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 3. p. 345, *&c.* though others queſtion it. ſee *Moyle*'s Works, V. 2. Lett. 4, and 6.

[c] *Joſeph.* L. 11. c. ult.

[d] *Prid.* Part 1. B. 8. p. 526. *Joſeph.* Ant. L. 12. c. 1.

[e] *Prid.* ib. p. 541, -2.

[f] When the World having been united under one great Empire was in the beſt manner prepared to receive it. See *Allix* p. 11. Concerning the ends and uſes which this Tranſlation ſerv'd, ſee *Allix* Part 2. p. 161. a more accurate account of compiling it may be ſeen in *Prid.* V. 2. p. 34, *&c.* 8 Ed.

had

had been made of that Verſion by the *Chriſtians.*) His Succeſſor *Euergetes* offer'd Sacrifices and gave thanks to the God of *Iſrael* for all his Victories, having ſeen the Prophecies of *Daniel* concerning them, and been convinc'd that he owed them only to that God whoſe Prophet had ſo fully predicted them. [h] *Ptolemy Philometor* had a Comment on the five Books of *Moſes* dedicated to him by his Preceptor, [i] and permitted *Onias* the High Prieſt to build a Temple in his Kingdom after the Model of that at *Jeruſalem*, and to perform the ſame Worſhip in it; [k] whereby the Prophecy of *Iſaiah* was fulfill'd, * that *there ſhould be an Altar unto the Lord in the midſt of the Land of Egypt*, [l] and by this means his Name became as well known there as in *Judea* itſelf, that Temple continuing for above three hundred

[g] *Philo* vit. *Moſ.* L. 3. comp. *Baſnage*, B. 6. c. 5. S. 11.

[h] *Prid.* Part 2. B. 2. p. 82. *Joſeph.* contr. *Ap.* L. 2.

[i] *Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt.* L. 7. c. ult. *&c. Prid.* Part. 2. B. 1. p. 29. *Euſeb.* Præp. Evang. L. 13. c. 12. *Clem. Alex.* Strom. L. 1. and 5.

[k] *Prid.* B. 1. p. 264.

‡ *If.* 19. 19.

[l] By this Prophecy the *Jews* thought themſelves authoriſed in building a Temple in *Egypt*, though it was a thing otherwiſe forbidden by their Law. *Allix*, p. 163.

and

and forty years. * When at length *Judea* was reduced to a *Roman* Province this People and their Religion became no leſs known all over that vaſt Empire. That they were very remarkably preſerv'd and proſper'd under it for ſome time, is particularly noted in its Hiſtory.[m] We find great Privileges granted them by *Julius Cæſar*,[n] and *Auguſtus*, *Tiberius*, *Vitellius* all ſending Victims to be offer'd at the Temple of *Jeruſalem*.[o] And thus did the four great

* *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 92. *Joſephus* ſays 333 years. *De Bell. Jud.* L. 7. c. 30.

[m] 'They are a ſort of men, ſays *D. Caſſius*, who though 'they have been often diminiſhed, yet have ſo far en-'creas'd, that they have been too hard for the power of 'the *Roman* Laws, and almoſt *arrived to the Confidence* '*and Liberty of making Laws for the reſt of the World.*' So Dr. *Edwards* [Survey p. 561.] renders the following words Και εστι και παρα τοις Ρωμαιοις το γενος τουτο, πολλουθεν μεν πολλακις, αυξηθεν δε επι πλειστον, ωστε και ες παρρησιαν της νομισεως εκνικησαι. Eſt id genus hominum (Judæorum) apud Romanos etiam: atque tametſi ſæpenumero imminutum fuerit, ita tamen auctum eſt, ut *legum quoque poteſtatem vicerit*. L. 37. p. 41. D. ed. *H. Steph.* The Hiſtorian probably means no more than that they prevail'd ſo far againſt the *Romans* as to live by their own Laws, or preſerve the free exerciſe of their Religion, which they did every where [ſee *Biſcoe*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. c. 6. S. 6. Not. a. p. 180.] and which was an indulgence not only peculiar to them, but pretty extraordinary in itſelf, conſidering their declared oppoſition to all other Eſtabliſhments, and general odium which they incurr'd ſome-

ſucceſſive Monarchies ſeverally contribute towards propagating the Knowledge of the true God in the World; thus as the laſt of his Prophets had foretold, † *from the riſing of the ſun even unto the going down of the ſame, was his Name Great among the Gentiles.* ‡ And though the *Jews* were never able at once to convert a whole Nation to their Church, and make it the eſtabliſhed Religion of the Country, yet they gain'd every where numerous *Proſelytes* [p]

ſometimes by their abuſing of their own. ſee p. 109. Not. S.

[n] *Joſeph.* contr. Ap. 2. Id. Ant. L. 16. c. 10, *&c.*

[o] *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 86. *Allix.* B. 2. c. 25. The ſame thing had been often done before, particularly by *Antiochus* the great [*Joſeph.* Ant. L. 12. c. 3.] and under *Seleucus*, 'when (as is obſerv'd by the Authors of *Univ. Hiſt.* V. 4. 'p. 45.) the *Jews* were in ſuch high eſteem that Sovereign 'Princes courted their friendſhip, and made magnificent 'Preſents to the Temple; and *Seleucus* furniſh'd out of 'his own Treaſury all the expences of it.' 2 *Macc.* 3. 3. — So far were they from being always that little inconſiderable Nation which ſome repreſent. See Dr. *Waterland*'s firſt Charge, p. 28.

† *Mal.* 1. 11.

‡ Comp. *If.* 45. 6.

[p] Of this number in all probability were *Jethro* and his Family among the *Midianites.* [*Ex* 18. 11.] *Naaman* and his Servants among the *Syrians* [2 *Kings* 5. 17.] *Araunah* the *Jebuſite* [2 *Sam.* 24. 23.] *Hiram* King of *Tyre* [1 *Kings* 5. 7. 2 *Chron.* 2. 12.] the Queen of *Sheba*, *Egypt* and *Ethiopia* [1 *Kings.* 10. 9. *Joſeph. Ant.* 8. 2. *Univ. Hiſt.* p. 801-2. Note S.] In *Solomon*'s time there were found above

to their Law and many more to the belief of One ſupreme God, (which was as much as was then required [q]) and thereby prepared the minds of men for a more perfect Diſpenſation: [r] and might have done this with a great deal better ſucceſs, had they acted more conformably to the genius of their own Inſtitution, and not treated all others with ſo much pride and ill nature as often render'd themſelves odious and contemptible to them, eſpecially in the latter Ages of their Government. [s] Though this perhaps was in ſome meaſure a natural conſequence of that ſeemingly *unſociable* ſpirit ſo neceſſary in them to prevent an entire intercommunion with the Idolatrous Religions round them; and

above an hundred and fifty three thouſand Strangers or Proſelytes in the Land [2 *Chron.* 2. 17.] without reckoning Women and Children, [ib. v. 18.] and in other Lands very probably might there be as many, by the miraculous converſion of *Nebuchadnezzar* [*Dan.* 3. 28, 29. 4. 34, *&c.*] and the other Princes abovemention'd. [*Eſther* 8. 17.] to which we may add *Joſephus*'s remarkable account of the *Adiabenian* Queen and her Son [*Ant.* 26. 2.] In our Saviour's time we read of devout men, or *Proſelytes*, of every nation under Heaven. [*Acts* 2. 5.] Beſides the Eunuch of *Ethiopia*, there were *Parthians* and *Medes* and *Elamites* (or *Perſians*) and dwellers in *Meſopotamia*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus* and *Aſia*, *Phrygia* and *Pamphylia*, *Egypt* and *Libya*; *Cretes* and *Arabians* and Strangers of *Rom.* [ib. 9. 10, 11.] ſee *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 93. or *Lardner*'s Credib. of G. *Hiſt.* B. 1. c. 3. S. 5.

might

might be greatly aggravated by others on their at length perſiſting in a ſettled averſion to thoſe Rites which they had ſuffer'd ſo much for conforming to. Beſides, the Jewiſh Prophets were often diſpatch'd to Foreign Countries to acquaint them with the Counſels of the Moſt High, and to make them *know the Lord.* [t] *Jeremiah* was ordain'd a Prophet unto the Nations, [u] who together with *Iſaiah* and *Ezekiel* propheſied to moſt of them. *Daniel* particularly deſcribes the fate of the Four Monarchies, as was obſerv'd above. *Amos* proclaims the Judgements of God on *Syria*, *Tyre*, *Edom*, *Moab* and *Ammon*. *Obadiah* is ſent to the *Idumeans*; *Jonah* to the People of *Niniveh*, the Metropolis

[q] See Dr. *Waterland*'s firſt Charge, p. 54.

[r] 'It does not appear that any of the moſt refined 'Philoſophers, thoſe men of admired knowledge and 'genius, ever converted ſo much as a ſingle Perſon or 'Village from their Idolatrous Superſtitions; on the con-'trary, they all meanly ſubmitted and conformed to the 'Idolatry eſtabliſhed in their reſpective Countries, and 'exhorted others to do ſo too. Whereas the *Jews* were 'inſtrumental to turn many from Idolatry and to ſpread 'the knowledge of the true God far and wide, in many 'parts of the *Roman* Empire, *Babylonia*, *Perſia*,' &c. *Leland*'s anſw. to the *Moral Philoſopher*, p. 57.

[s] V. *Juvenal.* S. 14. l. 100-103-4. *Tac.* Hiſt. 5. 5.

[t] *Ezek.* 25. 7. 17, *&c.* paſſim.

[u] 1. 5. comp. c. 27. and 1 *Eſdras* 1. 28. 47.

of

of the *Aſſyrians*, who ſtraightway believe and repent at his preaching; which ſhews (as is obſerv'd by a learned writer [x]) that God was kind to them as well as to the *Jews*, and that they had his Will in ſome meaſure diſcover'd to them before; otherwiſe they would not have been ſo capable of underſtanding the Divine Meſſage when it came to them, and of behaving themſelves ſuitably to it. [y] In like manner *Nahum* deſcribes the final Deſtruction of *Niniveh*, and *Zephaniah* proclaims the Divine vengeance on the neighbouring Countries of the *Philiſtines*, of *Moab*, and *Ammon*, as well as *Ethiopia* and *Aſſyria*. [z] And accordingly their Prophets are occaſionally ſought and honour'd by many of the greateſt Princes, who were thereby induced to acknowledge, fear and reverence the God of Heaven, though they did not entirely conform to his Will. Thus *Eliſha* is applied to by the Kings of *Syria*, * *Jeremiah* protected by

[x] *Edwards*'s ſurvey, *&c.* p. 296.

[y] V. *Buddei* Parerg. p. 426.

[z] 'One needs only read their Books to ſee that the 'Prophets not only foretold obſcure matters, or what 'particularly concern'd their State; but alſo things of a 'more ſplendid Nature; the Overthrow of Cities, of 'Kingdoms; the Deſtruction of whole Nations, the de'ſtruction of their own City, with its reeſtabliſhment.

* 2 *Kings* c. 5. and 8.

Mat-

the King of *Babylon*, ‡ *Daniel* honour'd and advanced by the ſucceſſive Rulers of the *Chaldeans*, *Medes* and *Perſians*, as obſerv'd above.

And thus did this famous People every way ſerve to propagate the Knowledge and Fear of the One true God in almoſt every Nation, either by their Proſperity or Adverſity, their Conqueſts or Captivitys,[a] their Separation from the reſt of the Nations, or their Diſperſion among them; both by the Laws that were given them, and by the Prophets which at various times were rais'd up in the midſt of them, proclaiming the Power and Juſtice of the Univerſal Governour of the World, and foretelling his diſpoſal both of them, and the neighbouring States, together with the reaſons of it.* Thus were Mankind far from being rejected by their Maker during this ſtate of *Nonage*, though he had his peculiar reſidence among the *Jews*, and was their viſible Guardian and

[c] Matters which would render their Books very illuſtrious, [c] and which would cauſe them to be read, not only by [c] the *Jews*, but alſo by the neighbour Nations, the [c] *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Aſſyrians*, *Perſians*, *Egyptians*' &c. *Allix* Reflex. B. 2. p. 41.

‡ *Jer.* 39. 11. 40. 1.

[a] *Victi victoribus leges dederunt*, ſays *Seneca* of this People. Aug. de Civ. D. L. 6. c. 11.

* See the Texts in p. 103. Note a.

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Director. The expreſs Terms of his Covenant indeed belong'd to them (which as it conſiſted in temporal things he was often obliged to interpoſe in order to make good the Performance of it, [b] and which on that very account could not be a more perfect one; [c] the real Benefits thereof, the Heavenly *Canaan*, of which the firſt may be conceiv'd as only a Shadow, extended to *the People of every Nation that feared God and worked Righteouſneſs*; and he might fix his reſidence in *Jewry*, as being

[b] See *Bp. Sherlock* Diſc. 5. p. 150.

[c] V. *Crellii* Orat. 2. Quare nec *Moſes* nec Philoſophi perfectam virtutem preſcribere potuerint. 'Perfectionem 'ſanctitatis ideo Populo *Hebræo* preſcribere et ad illam 'ſequendam eundem acrioribus ſtimulis incitare *Moſes* 'Dei nomine non potuit, quod felicitatem ac mercedem, 'ob quas Pietas colenda eſſet, terrenæ Reipublicæ otio, 'et eorum tantum bonorum affluentia terminaret, quæ 'ad corporis paſtum ſpectant, quorumque uſus hujus vitæ 'circumſcribitur cancellis, ita requirente iſtius Populi 'infantia: quin etiam illam Rempublicam in qua pietatis 'fuæ fructum Gens *Iſraelitica* deberet capere, armis et 'parare et tueri juberet. Unde ſi totam præceptorum '*Moſaicorum* rationem ad iſta tempora accommodatam 'conſideres, animadvertes eam iſti pietatis præmio ap-'prime fuiſſe conſentaneam.' &c. *Crell.* Eth. Chriſt. p. 443, &c. Op. Tom. 4. 'As they were to continue 'ſeparate from others for the preſervation of the true 'Religion, they ſtood in need of Temporal Promiſes 'that they might have no Temptation for Temporal

'Gain

the midſt of the Nations, [d] in order to diſpenſe the rays of his Light more equally and advantageouſly among them, to whom his choſen People probably were deſign'd to bear a due proportion, as ſome underſtand theſe words of *Deuter.* 32.8. *He ſet the bounds of the People according to the number of the People of* Iſrael. [a] We are apt to conceive the Deity as partial in his favours to this People, and at the ſame time think that they deſerv'd them the leaſt of all People, both which Notions perhaps are en-

'Gain to fall away into the Gentile Superſtitions. For 'ſince the Heathen ow'd all their Worldly Succeſſes to 'the Worſhip of their Idols and falſe Gods, there was 'a neceſſity, in proportion, that the God of *Iſrael* ſhould 'ſhew himſelf as gracious to his Votaries, as the falſe 'Gods were ſuppoſed to be to theirs; and therefore it's 'ſo far from being a Derogation to this Law that it 'abounds ſo much with the promiſes of Temporal Bleſſ-'ings, that it is a particular Inſtance of the Wiſdom of 'it; ſuch Promiſes being not only moſt likely to work 'upon that ſtupid lowminded People, but ſuited alſo to 'their particular Circumſtances and Occaſions, as they 'were to be kept ſeparate from other Nations.' Dr. *T. Burnett. Boyle*'s Lect. p. 543. Fol.

[d] *Ezeck.* 5.5. 38.5. vid. *Reland Palæſt.* L.1. c.10. and the Life of *David* Vol. 2. p. 92.

[a] See *Jenkin* V.1. p.49. That the *Jews* were ſpread over all the World about *Chriſt*'s time, as it is ſaid *Acts* 2.5. vid. *Joſeph.* B.I. c.16. *Philo.* Legat. ad Caj. id. in Flacc. *Lardner*'s Credib. B.1. c.3. or *Baſnage*'s Hiſt. B.6.

tirely groundleſs. Their favours, we have ſeen, were rather favours to the whole World, and they only Inſtruments in the hand of God to hold forth this Light to all around them, whereof other Nations were ſure to reap the benefit in due time, whether they themſelves ſtood faithful to their truſt, or fell for violating it.[b] Nor perhaps were they worſe than any other Nation would have been in the like Circumſtances. The *Canaanites*, we know, behaved worſe under all their early advantages and repeated means of improvement, as obſerv'd above; * nor could their Deſcendents the *Carthaginians* deſerve any better Character: nor did the more polite and learned Nations *Greek* and *Roman* afterwards advance above the ſame groſs errors in religious worſhip.[c] Nay whether the *Hebrews* were not in ſome reſpects more particularly fit to have the *Oracles of God* committed to them has been queried by ſuch as obſerve their former exactneſs in ſettling their Hiſtory, in diſtinguiſhing their Genealogies and preſerving all their Records; their great tenaciouſneſs of Ancient Rites and Cuſtoms; and their extraor-

[b] See *Welſted* p. 77.

* p. 107.

[c] See this Obſervation explain'd in *Fleury*'s Manners of the *Iſraelites* c. 21.

dinary

dinary Zeal in making Proſelytes.[d] And though we may allow them to have been in general extreamly ſtupid and perverſe, yet if we look over their Hiſtory with any tolerable degree of Candour, we muſt be convinc'd that they were very different from the acount given of them by ſome unfair modern Writers.[e] But the more weak and ſottiſh this People were of themſelves, the better was God's great end anſwer'd in diſtinguiſhing himſelf and his Revelations by them; the leſs they did or could do in their own defence, the more illuſtrious was that very extraordinary Providence which protected them, as is obſerv'd by an able Writer.[f] And the leſs capable they were of inventing the great things contained in their Books, the more apparently did theſe point out another Author, and prove more inconteſtibly that they had ſuch communicated to them from above.[g] However, they were in the hands of God, a certain means of bringing men by

[d] *Jenkin* V. 1. p. 91. 93. I. A. *Danzii* Cura Hebræorum in conquirendis Proſelytis.

[e] See the *Moral Philoſopher* p. 255, *&c.* V. 1. with *Leland*'s Anſwer. V. 1. p. 207. and *Worthington*'s Eſſay p. 105, 106.

[f] Div. Leg. B. 5. S. 2. p. 362.

[g] See Mr. *Seed*'s Diſcourſes V. 2. Serm. 7. p. 204.

degrees to the knowledge of the Truth. They were his *Witneſſes*, as He himſelf terms them,* *that he was God.* The firſt production and original ſtate of Mankind, the Hiſtory of the World and its Government manifeſted by frequent Interpoſitions and expreſs Predictions of the moſt remarkable Events, was neceſſary to be known and well remember'd: Memoirs of this therefore were to be kept ſomewhere, and in ſuch a manner as to be of uſe to all Ages. And this the *Jews* effected, being diſpers'd among all Nations, and yet ſtill kept a diſtinct People; by which means theſe great Truths were both preſerved pure and propagated to moſt parts of the World. Their Law was a *Schoolmaſter* † to teach them the rudiments of Religion who were to inſtruct and improve others; it was added to the Promiſe, or to the Religion of the *Patriarchs*, [a] *becauſe of Tranſgreſſions*, ‡ to convict them of Guilt and convince them of the neceſſity of laying hold on thoſe Terms of Grace which were to be offer'd in due time. Their whole Inſtitution was a State of Diſcipline and *Bondage under the Elements of this World*, ‖ a ſort of ſervile con-

* *Iſaiah* 43. 10. 12. † *Gal.* 3. 24.
[a] *Div. Leg.* B. 5. S. 1. p. 361.
‡ *ib.* 3. 9. ‖ *ib.* 4. 3.

fine-

finement and Tutelary regimen, conducting them by preſent, temporal rewards and earthly proſpects; affording only a dark, diſtant intimation of better things, and introducing theſe in figurative repreſentations, by Sacrifices, Types and Emblems; till they as well as the reſt of the World were got out of their *Minority*, able to walk by a more Perfect Rule, and fit to enter on and make a proper uſe of their *Inheritance*; till the *Fulneſs of the Time was come:* which is the next great Period we are to conſider.

From the foregoing account it appears that God made ſuch ample proviſion for the inſtruction of Mankind by the various Diſpenſations of his Providence and Revelations of his Will at ſundry times and in divers manners, that the miſſion of his Son was not wanted for ſome time; neither would his coming have been ſo ſeaſonable or ſo fitting till after thoſe other methods had been tried. It was proper that the *Houſeholder* ſhould firſt ſend his ſeveral Servants to ſee after the ſtate of his *Vineyard*, and reap the fruits of his early care and Culture in their ſeaſons: * that lower Inſtitutions ſhould precede and pave the way for this laſt and higheſt of all.

* *Matth.* 21. 33. *Jer.* 7. 25.

The *Patriarchs* had ſtanding memorials of God's preſence and protection, as well as frequent and familiar Converſe with him, aſſuring them of his Favour and thereby inviting and alluring them to his Service: The *Law* was given to his peculiar People by *Angels*, * in all the appearances of pomp and terror, to aſtoniſh and awe them into obedience; the *Prophets* were ſent to denounce variety of Judgements againſt their Diſobedience; to threaten them with the ſevereſt Plagues on their Apoſtacy, as well as to promiſe them proportionable Bleſſings upon their return to their Duty; and by both means to prepare them for, and gradually open to them the proſpect of that great, univerſal Bleſſing, the end and Completion of all his Promiſes, — MESSIAH; in whom were laid up *the ſure mercies of David*; mercies of a much higher nature than any of thoſe which they were then expecting; who ſhould procure for them a far more noble and extenſive Kingdom than they had ever dreamt of, ſhould make them brethren and fellow-citizens with all the world here, and fellow-heirs to a more valuable Inheritance in the

* *Acts* 7. 53. *Gal.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 2. 2.

World

World to come.[a] Who notwithſtanding their blindneſs and preverſeneſs and many Tranſgreſſions, ſhould certainly deliver them from all their Adverſities, and finally reſtore them and all Mankind to the favour and full Enjoyment of their God.

The Doctrines he taught contain a Syſtem of the moſt agreeable and important Truths (though not deliver'd in any Syſtematic,[b] artful method, or adapted in any reſpect to vicious Palates) giving us the moſt worthy, amiable notions of the Deity, and affording the

[a] During theſe Circumſtances — God was pleas'd that 'a Lawgiver ſhould be born among the *Jews* of another 'nature than he whom they expected, and infinitely more 'uſeful to them. Inſtead of a temporal King who might 'have increas'd their Power and Renown, but would not 'have leſſen'd their Ignorance nor their Vices, God ſent 'them a King worthy of Him, who taught them how 'they ought to live here to be eternally happy after this 'Life: and ſhew'd them that inſtead of being members 'of a little Common-wealth and enemies to the reſt of 'Mankind, they ought to look upon the whole World 'as their native Country, and all men as their fellow-'citizens: a Thought worthy of thoſe who already pro-'feſs'd to believe that all men are equally the Work of 'God.' *Le Clerc* on the Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 267.

[b] That there is leſs ground to ſuſpect them of Impoſture on this account, and that they are thereby of much greater uſe, See *Leland*'s Anſwer to *Chriſtianity as old*, &c. V. 2. p. 166, *&c.* and p. 245, 246.

ſtrongeſt Motives to love and obey him, the greateſt incitement to reſemble our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf in Goodneſs, Holineſs, and every Virtue of the Heavenly Life.

The Benefits he conferr'd were the reſcuing us from the power, and redeeming us from the penalty of Sin; repairing the breach made in our Nature by the firſt *Adam*, and reſtoring to us the loſt Communion with our Maker; not indeed in the ſame open, viſible manner as at firſt, which is neither neceſſary for, nor ſuitable to theſe Ages of the World; but by the more ſecret, ſilent influences of his Holy *Spirit*, which are equally efficacious [a] if duly attended to and improved; enabling us to attain unto all that Perfection which he requires or we are capable of in the preſent ſtate, and thereby entitling us to ſome higher Degree of Happineſs and Glory in another. By his own Blood he cancels the original *Covenant*, [b] and purchaſes a new one full of Grace and Mercy; freeing us from the whole of *Adam*'s Curſe, *viz.* *Death*, or utter *Extinction*; [c] and finally aſſuring us of a complete Victory over both that and

[a] See *Wollaſton*, p. 106. or A.Bp. *King*, p. 425. 3Ed.

[b] In what ſenſe *Covenants* are underſtood was hinted above, p. 29. Not. [d].

[c] See Not. [c] p. 29.

Hell

Hell * by the Gift of *eternal Life* and Happineſs. This is the true import of the Chriſtian Inſtitution, and in this ſenſe it muſt appear to be indeed a *Goſpel*, or *good Tidings of great joy to* ALL *People :* [d] which therefore ought to be reſerv'd till Mankind were able to comprehend and duly reſent ſo great a Bleſſing; till they were fit to make the proper uſe of ſuch a Scheme of infinite Goodneſs and Philanthropy. As nothing greater could come after this, and this was to be offered but once for all (otherwiſe, as the Apoſtle ſays, † *Chriſt muſt often have ſuffered ſince the foundation of the World*, often in every Country, and as often in vain, his offers of Salvation by their cheapneſs ſlighted, his Sufferings diſregarded) as no farther manifeſtation, I ſay, of God's Will could be made to Man either in terms more full and expreſs, or in a way more kind and condeſcending; it was fit that all ſuitable proviſions ſhould be made for the reception and continuance of it in the World, all proper preparations uſed to fix and aſcertain its Evidence, as well as to explain its Worth, and make men ſenſible of its

* *Rev.* 20. 14.

[d] In what reſpects Chriſtianity exceeded all former Inſtitutions may be ſeen at large in *Edwards*'s Survey, p. 313,-323. The effects which it will ſome time *certainly* produce are

† *Heb.* 9. 26.

true Uſe and Neceſſity. To this purpoſe the *Jews* were to be train'd up to the expectation of it by a ſeries of Prophecies foretelling the Time, Place and every Circumſtance of the *Meſſiah*'s Advent, and deſcribing the Nature of his Kingdom: their Law was to continue till it had effectually guarded them from all kinds of Idolatry and ſecured their dependence on the one ſupreme God; till they had attain'd to ſuch rational notions of his Nature and Providence as qualify'd them for a more pure and perfect way of worſhipping him, and enabled them to communicate it to the reſt of the World. The *Gentiles* were to have ſufficient experience both of the Weakneſs of their

are well deſcribed by Mr. *Worthington* in his *Eſſay on Man's Redemption*, c. 11. *&c.* who ſuppoſes that they will be attainable even *in this Life* and has taken a great deal of pains to prove it. The ſubſtance of his Scheme is thus laid down, p. 253. — 'My perſwaſion is, that our Re-'demption by Chriſt will, when it hath its perfect Work, 'be productive of all thoſe great and happy effects — 'That the Human Nature ſhall, before the end of the 'Goſpel Age and conſummation of all things be deliver'd 'from Sin, Sorrow and Sickneſs, and all the other Miſeries 'and Evils of this Life, proceeding from the Fall of our 'firſt Parents, and in the end from Death itſelf; without 'taſting of which it ſhall be tranſlated from an earthly 'Paradiſe, which it ſhall once more enjoy, to an Hea-'venly one, which it ſhall enjoy for ever. And moreover 'that

Underſtanding in ſearching after God, and the infirmity of their Nature in not acting up to what they might and did diſcover; ſufficient to make them wiſh and hope for ſome Heavenly Guide (to inform them how they came into their preſent ſtate of Ignorance and Imperfection, and how and when they ſhould be able to get out of it,) which in fact the wiſeſt of them did, as particularly appears from two remarkable Inſtances in *Socrates*'s Diſcourſe upon *Prayer* and *Sacrifice*, [e] and in *Ariſtotle*'s declaration juſt before his Death [if the account of it be genuine] concerning the reaſonableneſs of believing that the Gods ſhould come down from Heaven to inſtruct and relieve Mankind.[f]

'that all the Diſorders of Nature in general ſhall be rec-
'tified, and that there ſhall be a Redemption of the
'whole Creation to its firſt State, as well as of Man, the
'Lord of it.' How far this differs from the Hypotheſis of *Burnet*, or *Aſgil*'s *Argument*, may be ſeen in the ſame place.

[e] See *Plato*'s ſecond *Alcibiades* near the end. More paſſages to the ſame purpoſe are collected by Dr. *Clarke*, Evidences. Prop. 7. and Dr. *Young* Diſſert. V. 1.

[f] *Auctor de Pomo* [de quo v. *Fabric.* Bibl. Gr. Tom. 2. L. 3. p. 166.] *Cæl. Rhod.* Ant. L. 17. 36. [ſee *Bayle*'s *Dict.* Art. *Ariſtotle*, Note Q.] *Stanley* Vit. Philos. concerning the Tradition of his having convers'd with a *Jew*, ſee *Gen. Dict.* V. 2. p. 267.

Thus

Thus was the Conſciouſneſs of their Defects requiſite in the Heathens to prepare them for, and diſpoſe them to embrace a Remedy when it ſhould be offer'd; and the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy was equally requiſite to fit *them* for adminiſtering this Remedy; the one made its value better underſtood, the other render'd its Evidence more inconteſtable throughout all Ages. No ſtronger Teſtimony than that of Prophecy could be given to confirm its truth, nor any greater Token of its Uſefulneſs than that which appear'd in the miſerable State of the Heathen World without it; both highly contributed to procure *Chriſtianity* its due regard and eſteem in the World; but neither of them could have taken place had it been from the beginning, as the Objection * ſuppoſes. We ſee then in general that ſome time muſt have preceded the Publication of the Goſpel; and we ought to conſider that if it were delay'd a while longer than we can particularly account for, yet as much as that Period may ſeem to have loſt, ſo much we of theſe latter Ages manifeſtly get by the delay; 'tis ſo much nearer to us, and thereby its Light and Evidence more clear at preſent, its Heat and Influence proportionably ſtronger;

* p. 25.

all

all which we have occaſion enough for already: and well is it for us that it came ſo late, if all its Evidence decreaſe ſo faſt by length of time, as theſe very ſame Objectors would inſinuate.[a] And how do we know but that it might be deliver'd about the middle Age of the World, and by that means be neareſt to the ſeveral Generations, and the moſt juſt proportion kept between the length of time during which *Chriſt*'s future Advent was to be foretold and expected, and that in which his paſt appearance is to be acknowledg'd and commemorated? We are haſty and ſhort-ſighted, our views limited to a few years and we become impatient at ſeeing any of them paſs over before the whole Plot is unravel'd, and would have all brought on the Stage at once: but it is far otherwiſe with the great God, to whom a thouſand years are as one day; who has an immenſely large progreſſive Scheme conſiſting of many underparts and intermediate ſteps, all placed in their proper Periods, and each riſing upon the paſt, and the whole conducted in that regular, gentle manner which is beſt ſuited to the moral Government of a World of intelligent free

[a] *Chriſtianity as old*, c. 12. p. 163. 8vo. from *Craig*. of which ſee Dr. *Rotheram*'s Diſſertation. *Edinb.* 1743.

Agents,

Agents, and moſt becoming a Being of infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

But to be more particular. The Period in which our Saviour came into the world may be conceiv'd to be the *Fullneſs of Time* and fitteſt for ſuch a Diſpenſation on the following accounts. Firſt, as it appear'd to want it moſt: Secondly, as it was the moſt able to receive and propagate it: and Thirdly, as it was the beſt qualify'd to examine its Evidence, confirm its Truth, and convey it down to future Ages.

Firſt, it wanted it moſt, and that in regard to both its *Morals* and *Religion*: 1. That Age ſtood in the greateſt need of a Reformation in its Morals, as it appears to have been the moſt wicked and abandon'd of any upon record. As to the *Jews*, we are told that both their Magiſtracy and Miniſtry were then corrupted to the laſt degree, their Laws againſt the worſt of Villains never executed* their moſt ſacred Offices, not excepting that of the High Prieſthood, ſet to ſale, the Temple turn'd into a place of Merchandiſe, their Prieſts made of the loweſt of the People, and devoted wholly to Intereſt and the loweſt kinds of Traffick; the

* The low State of their Sanhredrim about that time, may be ſeen at large in *Lightfoot* Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 370, 671, &c.

whole

whole Nation ſplit into Sects and Factions, hating and perſecuting and devouring one another. [a]

In ſhort, the account which their own Hiſtorian gives of them not long after this time will be ſufficient to determine the point before us, who concludes it with this Declaration; That if the *Romans* had delay'd taking vengeance on them, he believes their City muſt either have been ſwallow'd up by an Earthquake or Deluge, or deſtroy'd by Fire from Heaven, as *Sodom* was, ſince it produced a much more impious Generation. [b] — But this remarkable Wickedneſs of the *Jews* will be conſider'd in another reſpect hereafter. — Nor were the *Gentiles* leſs corrupt, or even capable of ever being more ſo; nor does it ſeem poſſible to conceive Human Nature to be ſunk lower in all kinds of Vice and Senſuality, than they were at that time (notwithſtanding all

[a] See *Lightfoot*, Op. Lat. V. 2. p. 148. 272, *&c.* *Edwards*'s Survey, V. 1. p. 389, *&c.* *Lardner*'s Credibility of the G. Hiſt. B. 1. c. 5. *Benſon*'s Hiſt. of planting the *Chriſtian Rel.* V. 2. p. 234, *&c.* *Le Clerc.* Proleg. ad Hiſt. Eccl. Sect. 1. 2. *Baſnage* B. 1. c. 5, *&c.* *Whitby*'s Neceſſity, *&c.* of the *Chriſtian Rev.* c. 2. Nor is this at all ſurpriſing, ſince the reigning Party among them were at that time *Sadducees.* *Joſeph.* Ant. 18. 2. add *Wall*'s Note on *Acts* 5. 17.

[b] *Joſephus*, B. I. L. 16. c. 16.

their

their Improvements in other reſpects) as may ſufficiently appear from the Deſcription given of them by St. *Paul* * whoſe witneſs is true, and moſt abundantly confirm'd by their own Writers. [a]

But Secondly. The World at that time more eſpecially wanted a Reformation in Religion, and was grown weary of all former Inſtitutions. The *Jewiſh* Law had fully anſwer'd its

* *Rom.* 1. 21. *&c.*

[a] Some account of them may be ſeen in *Millar*'s Hiſt. of the Propag. c. 5. p. 54, *&c.* and the Bp. of *London*'s 2 Paſt. Lett. 4, 5, *&c.* or *Buddei* Eccl. Apoſt. c. 1. §. 3. 'Ecce *Romana* Reſpublica, quod non ego primus dico, 'ſed auctores eorum unde hæc mercede didicimus tanto 'ante dixerunt, ante Chriſti adventum, paulatim mutata, 'et ex pulcherrima atque optima, peſſima atque flagitio-'ſiſſima facta eſt. Ecce ante Chriſti adventum poſt de-'letam *Carthaginem*, majorum mores non paulatim ut 'antea, ſed torrentis modo præcipitati; adeo juventus 'luxu atque avaritia corrupta eſt.' *Auguſtin.* de C. D. L. 2. c. 19. et Id. ib. c. 21. Conf. *Salluſt.* B. C. *Paterc.* L. 2. c. 1. *Senec. Ep.* 7. et de Ira, L. 2. c. 8, *&c.* cum *Sueton. Tacit. Petr. Arb.* paſſim. 'Si Ethnicorum mores 'paulo ante *Chriſtum* et paullo poſt intueamur, quæ fuit 'doctiſſima ætas, peſſimos et ſceleratiſſimos fuiſſe com-'periemus, ut docent qui eorum temporum hiſtoriam con-'ſcripſerunt. Bella Civilia temporibus *Marii*, et *Sullæ*, 'ſtatus Reipub. *Rom.* perturbatiſſimus, qui proxime ſe-'quntus eſt: bella iterum Civilia *Cæſ.* et *Pomp.* tum 'etiam Triumvir. Principatus ipſe *Aug.* et multo magis

'*Tib.*

end, and almoſt ceaſed of itſelf; the Ceremonial part of their Oeconomy began rather to be a Yoke of Servitude and an unneceſſary Burden to them; the Moral was in a great meaſure loſt in their looſe Caſuiſtry and vacated by their Traditions. [b] The ſenſe of the Prophetic Writings had been darkened and debaſed by their corrupt Gloſſes, and the Key of true Knowledge at that time taken away by thoſe very Perſons

[a] *Tib. Calig. Ner.* et *Dom.* ne ulterius pergam, cloacæ fuerunt flagitiorum et ſcelerum apud *Romanos*, qui tamen *Græcos* paſſim quaſi ſe deteriores deſcribunt. *Sall. Cic: Sen. Tac. Suet.* aliique cum nobis hodie leguntur, etiamnum indignationem in improbos illius ævi homines nobis movent: ne proferam *Pers.* et *Juven.* Poetas Satiricos, qui forte modum exceſſiſſe, in caſtigandis moribus ſui ævi poſſent. Itaque pravæ religionis effectus ſiſtere non potuit Philoſophia, et paucorum contra torrentem nitentium conatus irriti fuere.' *Cleric.* Proleg. Eccl. Hiſt. S. 2. c. 1. 20. add *Whitby*'s Neceſſity of the *Chriſtian Rev.* c. 8.

[b] Eorum tum Religio, quantumvis Scripturas regulam ſuam pronunciarent, Traditionibus omnis generis præcipuè nitebatur; quas non tantum Scripturis præferebant, ſed iiſdem omnem Scripturis Authoritatem derogabant. *Marc.* 7. 7. - 9. *Tenuerunt Dominum cum illis contraxiſſe fœdus juxta legem Traditionis.* Baal Turim in Gen. 1. 3. Tenebant *Scriptam Legem deficere comparatam Legi non ſcriptæ.* Tanch. Fol. *Legemque ſcriptam ob mercedem doceri poſſe, non item non ſcriptam.* Maim. in Thalm. Torah. Perck. 1. *Lightfoot* Op. Lat. V. 1. p. 517. Vide plura Teſtimonia *ibid.* V. 2. p. 31.

that ſhould have open'd the Scriptures and imparted it to them. Philoſophy had ſhewn its utmoſt force in the great Maſters of *Athens* and *Rome*, and was able to afford juſt Light enough to diſcover its own Errors and Defects, and to refer them to a better Guide, as we have ſeen above. Its Votaries having been long toſſed to and fro among the variety of Syſtems which human Wit had invented, were at laſt left in abſolute Uncertainty, unable to decide amongſt them, and influenc'd by nothing more than ſome dark Hints of ancient Tradition, [c] and

[c] This appears to have always been the caſe in moſt of the beſt things which they deliver on the moſt important Subjects, as may be eaſily diſcern'd by the abrupt manner in which they commonly retail ſuch Sentiments, by their ſeldom reaſoning on them long conſiſtently, (I ſpeak of their Writers in general) or being able to purſue their natural Conſequences; from whence methinks any indifferent Perſon wou'd conclude that they had never traced ſuch out by their own Reaſon, nor were the original Diſcoverers of them; at leaſt I could not help concluding ſo from hence; as well as from their frequent citing of *Tradition* and ſome *ſacred Records* for them, and appealing to what they have *heard* upon ſuch Subjects. I might have ſet down numberleſs expreſſions that confirm the obſervation, though I do'nt doubt but the ſame thing has been obſerv'd by many others: However I ſhall point out ſome remarkable Paſſages from *Plato* to this purpoſe. *Philebus.* Οι μεν παλαιοι κρειττονες ημων και εγγυτερω θεων

and that became one of its moſt flouriſhing Sects which profeſſed to doubt of every thing: and accordingly we find the great Ornament of this Sect *Cicero* declaring on ſome of the moſt important Points that it was impoſſible to determine on which ſide lay (not the Certainty, for that they did not pretend to diſcover, but)

θεων οικουντες ταυτην φημην παρεδωσαν. Id. Ep. 7. Πειθεσθαι δε χρη παλαιοις τε και ιεροις λογοις, οι δε μηνυουσιν ημιν αθανατον ψυχην ειναι, δικας τε ισχειν, και τινειν τας μεγιστας τεμωριας, οταν τις απαλλαχθη τ̃ σωματος. *Gorgias.* Ταυτ' εστιν ω Καλλικλεις, α εγω ακηκοως πιστευω αληθη ειναι, και εκ τουτων των λογων τοιονδε λογιζομαι συμβαινειν. Ο θανατος κ.τ.λ. *Phædo.* Παλαιος μεν ουν εστι τις ο λογος αυτος ὁ μεμνημεθα, ως εισιν ενθενδε αφικομεναι [αι ψυχαι] και παλιν γε δευρο αφικνουνται, και γιγνονται εκ των τεθνεωτων. Id. ib. Αδε και λεγεται μεγιστα ωφελειν η βλαπτειν του τελευτησαντα ευθυς εν αρχη της εκεισε πορειας. λεγεται δε ουτως, ως αρα τελευτησαντα εκαστον ο εκαστ̃ δαιμων οσπερ ζωντα ειληχει ουτος αγειν επιχειρει εις δη τινα τοπον, οι δει τους συλλεγεντας διαδικασαμενους εις αδε πορευεσθαι κ.τ.λ. ib. Πολλοι δε εισι και θαυμασοι της γης τοποι, και αυτη ουτε οια, ουτε οση υπο των περι γης ειωθοτων λεγειν, ως εγω υπο τινος πεπυσμαι. Και ο Σιμμιας, πως ταυτα, εφη, λεγεις ω Σωκρατες; περι γαρ τοι της γης και αυτος πολλα δη ακηκοα. κ.τ.λ. *Apol. Socr.* Ει δε αυ οιον αποδημησαι εστιν ο θανατος ενθενδε εις αλλον τοπον, και αληθη εστι τα λεγομενα κ.τ.λ. ib. Τατε γαρ αλλα ευδαιμονεστεροι εισιν οι εκει των ενθαδε και ηδη του λοιπου χρονου αθανατοι εισι, ειπερ γε τα λεγομενα αληθη εστιν. *Phædrus.* Τουτου τοι ενεκα χρη, παντας τους λογους ανω και κατω μεταστρεφοντα, επισκοπειν ει τις πη ραων και βραχυτερα φαινεται επ'

even the greateſt Probability, [a] and concluding that in all ſuch Caſes 'tis much eaſier for him

αυτην οδ&. ινα μη ματην τολλην απιη και τραχειαν, εξου ολιγην τε και λειαν. Αλλα ει τινα τη βοηθειαν εχεις, επακηκοως Λυσιᾳ η τινος αλλᾳ τειρω λεγειν αναμιμνησκομεν&. ib. Ακοην γ' εχω λεγειν των τροτερων. τοδ' αληθες αυτοι ισασιν. Id. in *Timæo*. Εγω φρασω, ταλαιου ακηκοως λογον, ου νεᾳ ανδρ&. Id. de Rep. 10 fin. Και ητος, ω Γλαυκων, μυθοις εσωθη, και ᾳκ απωλετο. Και ημας αν σωσειεν, αν πειθωμεθα αυτω.

[a] Harum ſententiarum quæ vera ſit Deus aliquis viderit; quæ veriſimillima magna quæſtio eſt *Tuſc. Q.* L. 1. S. 11. V. *Cleric.* Proleg. ad Hiſt. Eccl. S. 2. c. 6. *de Academicis.*

[b] *De Nat. Deor.* L. 1. c. 32. Utinam tam facile Vera invenire poſſem quam falſa convincere. Id. ap. Lact. L. 2. c. 3. Notwithſtanding all the fine things which he had ſaid about the *Immortality* of the *Soul*, in which point he ſeems to the moſt ſanguine and poſitive of any, yet in his *Epiſtles* (where he is the moſt likely to ſpeak his real thoughts) we find him oft giving it all up and having recourſe only to the miſerable Comfort of *Inſenſibility*. L. 5. Ep. ult. Ut hoc ſaltem in maximis malis boni conſequamur ut *Mortem*, quam etiam beati contemnere debeamus, propterea quod *nullum ſenſum eſſet habitura*, nunc ſic affecti, non modo contemnere debeamus, ſed etiam optare. L. 6. Ep. 3. Sed hæc conſolatio levis eſt, illa gravior, qua te, uti ſpero, ego certe utor. Nec enim dum ero angar ulla re, cum omni vacem culpa; et ſi non ero, *ſenſu omni carebo*. id. Ep. 4. Deinde quod mihi ad conſolationem commune tecum eſt, ſi jam vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab ea Repub. avellar qua carendum eſſe doleam, præſertim *cum id ſine ullo ſenſu futurum ſit*. Id. ib. Sed cum plus in metuendo mali ſit quam in ipſo illo quod timetur, deſino;

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to ſay what is not his opinion, than what is.[b] They began then to be ſenſible that Human

præſertim cum impendeat in quo non modo Dolor nullus, *verum finis etiam Doloris futurus ſit.* More paſſages to the ſame purpoſe are collected and illuſtrated by Mr. *Warburton.* Div. Leg. p. 387, *&c.* 2 Ed. And among the ſeveral Apologies which the ingenious Author of his Life has offer'd for them this probably will be eſteem'd the moſt natural; that even here *in a melancholy hour Doubts and Difficulties* may be ſuppoſed to have *got the aſcendant* over *Cicero*, V. 2. p. 561. 4to. In truth, he ſeems to have been often in the ſtate of mind which he ſo well deſcribes *Tuſc. Q.* L. 1. S. 11. M.—Evolve diligenter ejus [*Platonis*] eum librum, qui eſt de animo: amplius quod deſideres nihil erit. A. Feci mehercule, et quidem ſæpius; ſed neſcio quomodo, dum lego, aſſentior: cum poſui librum, et mecum ipſe de immortalitate animorum cæpi cogitare, aſſenſio omnis illa elabitur. That he had great doubts of a Providence is fully ſhewn by the learned Author of *Ep.* ad *C. Middleton*, p. 74. Not. h. That he both recommended *Suicide* as the beſt refuge in affliction, and had frequent thoughts of putting it in practice, is no leſs clearly proved by the ſame judicious writer, p. 76, 77, 78. And though he himſelf declares upon occaſion that he was with difficulty withheld from it by the advice of *Atticus* and the intreaty of his Friends: ibid. yet it appears too plainly that this was not owing at laſt either to the ſtrength of his Judgement or his Reſolution; to any prudential Conſiderations reſpecting the State, himſelf, or his Relations, ſo much as to the ſame notorious want of Courage, which diſabled this great Man from bearing his Misfortunes decently, and which muſt equally deter him from attempting to end them together with his Life.

Reaſon was of itſelf a very inſufficient Director,[c] and grew weary of the common Deluſions from pretended Revelation. Oracles, Omens, Portents were generally exploded; [d] the old Fables of *Elyſian* Fields and *Pluto*'s Kingdom were grown ridiculous, and given over to Poets and Painters, as the ſame Author informs us. [e] Another very learned Writer of the ſame time tells us that they had near three hundred Opinions about the *Chief Good* and ultimate *End* of Action; [f] that the Objects of their Devotion amounted to thirty thouſand, [g] that there were no leſs than three hundred *Jupiters*, or ſupreme Gods among them, [h] in ſhort, that they had multiplied Deities to ſuch a degree, and modell'd their Worſhip in ſuch a manner that he and others of the wiſer ſort were aſhamed of them; [i] not to mention that the prevalence of

[c] Omnis cognitio multis eſt obſtructa Difficultatibus, eaque eſt et in ipſis rebus obſcuritas et in judiciis noſtris infirmitas, ut non ſine cauſa et doctiſſimi et antiquiſſimi invenire ſe poſſe quod cuperent diffiſi ſint. *Cic. Acad.* 2. 3. Mihi autem non modo ad ſapientiam cæci videmur, ſed ad ea ipſa quæ aliqua ex parte cerni videantur, habetes et obtuſi. Id. ap. *Lactant.* L. 3. c. 14. Neſcio quis nos teneat error et miſerabilis ignoratio veri. Id. ib. More Teſtimonies to the ſame purpoſe may be ſeen in Bp. *Leng*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. S. 12. p. 119, 110. Fol. and Dr. *Campbell*'s *neceſſity* of Revelation.

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the *Epicurean* Philoſophy had render'd both in a great meaſure inſignificant. [k] So great want had they of a thorough Reformation in Matters of Religion.

Secondly. That Age was alſo the fitteſt to receive ſuch a Benefit, as well as to propagate it in the World. At the ſame time that the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy waxed old and was ready to vaniſh away, it had ſerv'd to build up a better Houſe; had rais'd their Minds above itſelf and fitted them for a more perfect Inſtitution; and when the eye of Reaſon in the Gentile World had moſt of all diſcover'd its own dimneſs, and could do little more than ſhew the Darkneſs that ſurrounded them, it then in the beſt manner prepared them to receive and rejoice in a greater Light. The many fine Lectures which had been at ſeveral times deliver'd to the *Jews*

[d] *Cic.* de Divin. paſſim.

[e] Tuſc. Queſt. L. 1. S. 10, 11.

[f] *Varro* ap. *Auguſtin.* de C. D. L. 19. c. 1.

[g] *Auguſtin.* de Cecil. Deif. 4. 5, 6. *Jurieu.* Crit. Hiſt. V. 2. p. 13. When the Philoſopher *Bruxillus* made his dying ſpeech to the Senate they had Two hundred and eighty thouſand. *Miſſon*'s Travels, Part 2. p. 10.

[h] *Tertull.* Apol. c. 14.

[i] See *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 338. and *Sartorius* de Hypocriſi Gentilium circa Cultum Deorum.

[k] See *Le Clerc*'s Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 266.

by thoſe *Tutors* and *Governours* under whom God had placed them; by *Moſes*, *Joſhua*, *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, and the ſubſequent *Prophets*, though all of them in fact found inſufficient to direct their Conduct, and moſt of them to a great degree then defeated and perverted, as is obſerv'd above; yet we muſt allow that towards the End of this Diſpenſation they began in general to be better underſtood than formerly; upon the erecting of Synagogues after the *Babyloniſh* Captivity[l] they were more frequently read and inculcated, and under their Perſecutions in the time of the *Maccabees* more thoroughly ſtudied and regarded; and laſtly, by their numerous Schools and Academies which flouriſh'd in the moſt corrupt parts of their Government.[m] Learning of all kinds had ſpread itſelf among them, and got ſo good footing, as to render them the moſt capable of

[l] Vid. *Buddei* Hiſt. Eccl. V. T. V. 2. p. 976. *Vitringa* de Synagoga, L. 1. Par. 2. c. 12. p. 413. or *Patrick* on 2 *Chron.* 36. 15. Who aſſigns this as one chief Cauſe of their keeping ſo clear of Idolatry ever after, when they had neither Prophets nor Miracles among them. add *Prid.* V. 1. p. 389.

[m] See *Vitringa* Obſ. Sacr. L. 6. c. 14. S. 8, 9. Some of their own Authors ſay there were near four hundred Synagogues in *Jeruſalem* itſelf, as many Academies, and the ſame number of Schools: ſome reckon four hundred and eighty. *Budd.* Eccl. Hiſt. V. 2. Par. 2. Sect. 7. §. 17. p. 966.

diſcerning theſe Corruptions and recovering themſelves from the Errors and Abuſes above-mention'd when they were once freely pointed out to them and oppoſed; ſo that notwithſtanding the prevailing Iniquity, which made theſe in that reſpect the worſt of Times, their Minds had yet been ſo far cultivated as to be able to receive the Promiſed Seed; at leaſt much more ſo, than they had been at any time aſſignable before. The ſame thing had been done to the Heathen in a good meaſure, and from the ſame ſource by their great Lawgivers and Philoſophers, who got moſt of their beſt Notions from travelling into *Egypt*, *Chaldea* and *Phœnicia* themſelves, or from converſing with thoſe who did; ſuch were *Minos*, *Lycurgus*, *Solon*, *Numa*; of whom this has been ſhewn particularly by learned Men: [n] Such was *Zoroaſter* in the Eaſt, by ſome ſuppoſed to have

p. 966, &c. *Lightfoot* Op. V. 2. p. 140. and 197. That they aſſembled in theſe *Synagogues* three times a week. v. ibid. p. 280. comp. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* B. 2. c. 1. p. 26. Not. Q.

[n] *Gale's* Court of the Gent. Part. 1. B. 3. c. 9, &c. Dr. *Waterland*'s 1. Charge p. 17. 25. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 1. p. 487. V. 3. p. 330. Not. F. *Clem. Alex.* Strom. paſſim. The ſame is acknowledg'd by the *Greeks* themſelves. Vid. *Diod. Sic.* ap. Euſeb. Ev. Præp. L. 10. p. 480, &c. Ed. *Morell. Diog. Laert.* Proem. pr. cum *Caſaub.* et al. in loc. Add *Young*'s Diſſert. V. 1. c. ult.

been

been Servant to *Ezra* [o] by others to *Daniel*, [p] and ſuch was *Pythagoras* his Diſciple. [q] The ſame end was purſued by *Socrates* and his Diſciples, who prepared the way for a more perfect Reformation by labouring to bring men to the knowledge of one ſupreme God and the ſtudy of natural Religion, by teaching them *Humility*, and giving them hopes of an Inſtructor from Heaven, as was obſerv'd above. The ſame thing was a doing about the ſame time by that celebrated *Socrates* of the *Chineſe* (as he is call'd) *Confucius*. [r], The ſame Deſign was carried on by that remarkable Diſperſion of the *Jews* among all Nations, as obſerv'd likewiſe; by the communication of their Sacred Books, which had been long ago tranſlated into the moſt common Language, and many Copies of which were in their hands and ready to be

[o] *Hyde* Rel. V. P. c. 24. p. 314.

[p] *Prid.* Connect. V. 1. p. 331. *Hyde* Rel. Vet. *Perſ.* p. 314. He is ſuppoſed to have been ſometimes endow'd with the Spirit of Prophecy like *Balaam*, Id. ib. c. 31. p. 382, *&c.* What ground there is to believe that he clearly foretold the coming of *Chriſt*, may be ſeen in *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 2. p. 218. Another Prophecy to the ſame purpoſe occurs in p. 222. Not. R. *Prideaux* and *Moyle* agree in ſuppoſing that there muſt have been two Perſons of that Name, in order to reconcile the *Greek* and *Perſian* accounts. [*Moyle*'s Works V. 2. p. 63. and 75.] Others reckon ſix. vid. Cl. *Buddei* Eccl. Hiſt. Tom. 1. p. 349.

examin'd : [s] When at the ſame time they were both qualify'd and diſpoſed to examine them by the increaſe of general Learning and Philoſophy, which muſt help greatly to improve and poliſh them, notwithſtanding all its Imperfections abovemention'd; the very diſcovery of which Imperfections was likewiſe no inconſiderable argument of its Improvement. They had time to digeſt the Precepts and Inſtructions of their own Sages, as well as to become acquainted with the Hiſtory of the *Jews*. Superſtition of all kinds gradually wore off, and Arts and Sciences ſucceeded, which naturally excite and enliven the Genius of any People, and open a free Communication with others; and theſe were then in great perfection, as is too notorious to need particular proof. Nor can what is here ſaid be thought to be at all incon-

p. 349, *&c.* What reſemblance there is between his Hiſtory and that of *Moſes* may be ſeen in *Huet.* Dem. Evang. Prop. 4. c. 5. concerning his Writings vid. *Fabric.* Biblioth. Gr. L. 1. c. 36. p. 242, *&c.*

[q] *Prid.* V. 1. p. 213. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 2. p. 236. Not. Z, *&c.*

[r] Vid. *Burnet* Arch. Ph. p. 20. He is ſuppoſed to have been acquainted with the *Jewiſh* Religion. See *Young*'s Diſſert. V. 1. p. 293.

[s] Vid. *Walton.* Apparat. B. Polyglott. S. 9. Par. 3. or *Allix*, B. 2. c. 25. or *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 4. B. 2. c. 1. p. 40.

ſiſtent

ſiſtent with that remarkable Degeneracy and Corruption mention'd under the former Head, if we reflect how often in common Caſes the ſame Perſons who as to Abilities and Genius are the moſt capable of apprehending and applying any Inſtruction, and in that ſenſe beſt diſpoſed to receive it, are yet in another ſenſe, *i.e.* in point of Ingenuity and Inclination as little diſpoſed to admit ſome branches of it, (or who in Underſtanding may be arrived at very great perfection, when there Morals are at a criſis in the other extreme) on which account they want it ſtill the more, and ſuch a juncture may be a very proper one to adminiſter it and lay a good foundation for their improvement in both theſe reſpects.

Thus were Mankind in general train'd up and ripe for a new Diſpenſation, as well inclined to attend to ſomething of that kind, as able in a good meaſure to perceive and reap the Benefit of it when it ſhould be offer'd; their Curioſity was rais'd and their Capacity ſuited to any religious Enquiries; nor was it at *Athens* only that they ſpent their time in *telling or hearing ſome new thing*. Science and Literature had made conſiderable progreſs weſtward, and every where Men's Minds were enlarg'd together with their Commerce. And thus all things con-

conſpired to bring the World toward a State of MATURITY; and at the ſame time the Circumſtances of it were ſuch as remarkably contributed to ſpread all kinds of Knowledge in the moſt expeditious and effectual manner. All this while the *Roman Empire* had been growing up to that vaſt extent which it reach'd under *Auguſtus*, and had united the ſeveral Governments under one Head, and ſettled itſelf in a general Tranquility: it had carried its Language and Arts almoſt as far as its Arms; had open'd a Correſpondence and eſtabliſh'd a Commerce between all the then known parts of the World, from whence Intelligence was quickly convey'd to *Rome* and Orders diſpatch'd from thence. [a] *Judea* the place were the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* was to ariſe had juſt been reduced to a *Roman* Province [b] whereby regular accounts were taken of all remarkable Tranſactions in it by the *Roman* Governours [c] and

[a] The Inſtitution of *Poſts* among the *Romans* is generally attributed to *Auguſtus*; though we read of them long before on ſome occaſions among the *Perſians*. *Herodot.* 8.98. *Xen. Cyrop.* L.8. *Eſther*, 3.13. and 8.10. v. *Briſſon* de R. P. p. 147.

[b] See *Lardner's* Credib. of the G. H. B. 1. c. 10. S. 10.

[c] See an Account of their *Acta* in *Pearſon* on the Creed, Art. 4. fin.

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Appeals lay from thence to *Cæſar:* and by this means the fame of an extraordinary Teacher of a new Religion would ſoon be publiſh'd over all the civilized parts of the World, and its Profeſſors be better enabled to advance and defend it, and propagate it more ſucceſsfully than could have been expected under any other Conſtitution of the World before that Time. If true, it muſt by theſe means ſoon gain ground and appear to be ſo; if falſe, as ſoon be ſilenc'd and confuted.

For, Thirdly, this Age was the beſt qualify'd to examine the evidence of ſuch a Revelation, to confirm its truth and convey it down to Poſterity. It was in compariſon of thoſe before, a learned, curious and inquiſitive Age, as we have ſeen, and therefore like to be more cautious and ſceptical in a thing of this nature, not ſo eaſy to be impoſed upon or apt to run into every religious Project. There were Men every where ready to confute and expoſe the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution had it contain'd any thing either falſe or frivolous, abſurd or immoral; if it had conſiſted of either Enthuſiaſm or Impoſture, or a mixture of each. At that time the many Sects and Factions in the World had whetted themſelves by Contention, and were perpetual ſpies upon each other, ſo that no conſiderably new Religion could

could gain ground among them without being thoroughly ſifted by the adverſe Parties. The *Phariſees* and *Saducees*, the *Stoics* and *Epicureans* were ſubtle and perverſe Diſputers, and all of them eager enough to oppoſe the *Chriſtians*. The world had then alſo ſufficient Knowledge of the Powers of Nature to be able to judge of *Miracles*, and diſtinguiſh them from any uncommon appearance or effect of Art. *Prophecy* had been for ſome time withdrawn from the *Jews*, which muſt make them at firſt more ſhy and ſuſpicious of any new Pretences to Inſpiration. [a] *Oracles* began to ceaſe among the *Gentiles*, by being deſpiſed and generally neglected, *Divination* of all kinds was brought into contempt : and though they were

[a] We may add, that the ceaſing of this, as well as of Miracles, for a time would likewiſe be a means of raiſing greater Surpriſe among the *Jews* upon the revival of both, and of procuring more attention and regard to the Perſon who ſhould appear really to have the Gift of them again. 'Gifts granted to the Diſciples of our Saviour which 'none had been partakers of ſince the time of *Malachi*; 'God having ſo order'd it that the Deſires of the *Jews* 'might be the more enflamed for the *Meſſiah*'s Coming; 'as alſo that upon his coming he might the more eaſily 'be diſcerned.' *Allix.* Reflex. Part 4. p. 272. How far Revelation ceas'd from the time of *Malachi*; and what Reaſons are aſſignable for it, may be ſeen in *Vitringa.* Obſerv. Sac. L. 5. c. 6, - 14.

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ſufficiently deſirous of ſome better Light in Matters of Religion than what their own Reaſon and Philoſophy afforded them, as was obſerv'd above; yet from the many Falſe Lights which had been already held forth, and which had only ſerv'd to miſlead and bewilder them, they rather began to diſpair of finding any true one. Tired out with wandering through the mazes of Error and Uncertainty, the wiſeſt of them gave up all ſuch pretended Guides, and and look'd upon the whole Story of Revelation as a Cheat. Thus men were ſufficiently guarded againſt any new Impoſition though never ſo well ſupported by Learning, Wit and Policy. Nor would they ſure be leſs averſe to one that came without all theſe: to one appearing in ſuch a form and with ſuch recommendations as the *Chriſtian* Scheme; ſo deſtitute of aid from Human Wiſdom and Subtilty; ſo ſeemingly below what they had hitherto been entertain'd with; ſtript of all that Pomp and Ornament which attended the *Jewiſh* Inſtitution, that Art and Eloquence which adorn'd each Syſtem of Philoſophy; conſiſting of a few plain Rules of Life, and theſe ſo ſtrictly pure and perfect as equally to ſtrike at the corrupt *Scribe* and haughty *Philoſopher:* and therefore ſuch as muſt needs be to the one a *Stumbling Block* and

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to the other *Fooliſhneſs*; deliver'd for the moſt part occaſionally without Art or Method, in the moſt ſimple, unaffected manner, by mean, obſcure perſons, in full oppoſition to all the reigning Paſſions, Prejudices and Intereſts of the learned and great: under all theſe and the like diſadvantages, which are well known to have attended the *Chriſtian* Religion in its Infancy, if at ſuch a Time and in ſuch Circumſtances it was able to ſupport itſelf and make its way in the world, and ſtill be all an Impoſition both upon the Senſes and the Reaſon of Mankind, in what a ſtrange Situation muſt Mankind have been, in both of theſe reſpects! How different from what they have ever been before or ſince! How will the Men who are ſo apt to ſtumble and ſtrain at each little Difficulty which attends the preſent Scheme in common with all others, be able to get over this great unparallel'd one of ſuch an Impoſition [were it one indeed] prevailing ſo far and in ſuch a manner as this did? Or rather have they not from hence ſome reaſons to allow of its pretenſions? ſome room to admire with us how ſure muſt its foundation be! how ſtrong the outward Proofs of its Divine Authority! how great its inward force and efficacy! This to a fair Enquirer, who will weigh the caſe with any

tolerable impartiality, ſhould now afford the ſame conviction that it did of old, and ſhew it to be nothing leſs than the *Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.* Each of theſe Obſtacles to its reception gives the ſtrongeſt atteſtation to it when once approved of and embraced; and all together muſt, when duly attended to, gain it the higheſt eſteem, and be a ſtanding evidence both of its Truth and Excellence; a ſufficient anſwer to all Suſpicions that can be rais'd from the prevalence of any Fable or Impoſture in any other Age; from what may have been introduced in a manner directly contrary to this, by other kinds of Perſons, and in very different Times; by Craft, Policy or Perſecution, in days of Bigotry, Blindneſs and Superſtition. 'Tis an obſervation frequently inſinuated by ſuch as are no Friends to Revelation, that there are certain Seaſons when any thing will paſs upon the World under the Notion of Religion: [a] which has no doubt a good deal of truth in it with regard to the general belief of things marvellous and extraordinary: But from all that is gone before I think it ſufficiently appears that this Age was

[a] *Voltaire*'s Letters, L. 7. To the ſame purpoſe (if I miſtake not) are ſome parts in the Life of *Homer* 1 Edit. and ſeveral paſſages in *Bayle*'s Dict. and the *Characteriſticks.*

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by no means ſuch; that it can neither be charg'd with Ignorance nor Credulity; that it cannot be ſuſpected of any extraordinary Diſpoſition to receive ſuch a Doctrine as that of *Chriſtianity*, and from ſuch hands, were it not manifeſtly true and of Divine Authority: and that therefore the examination into the Grounds thereof at its firſt propagation, and the full Conviction which each Party muſt have had before it would be able to gain admittance with them, might fairly ſerve for all ſucceeding Generations, and muſt be allow'd to add one of the ſtrongeſt confirmations to it.

Laſtly, this Age was the beſt qualify'd to hand it down to Poſterity. As it was an inquiſitive and diſcerning one, ſo it was no leſs letter'd and hiſtorical. The *Auguſtan* Age is remarkable to this day for the number of its Writers. There is none better known, ſcarcely any of which ſo full and particular accounts are given. The *Roman* Empire had been juſt ſettled, and the minds of its chief Members turn'd from Arms and Action, to Works of Genius and Speculation; fond of celebrating its Conqueſts and recording its Glory they gave themſelves up to the Study of Eloquence and good Writing. Their Chronology had been lately reform'd and adjuſted; exact Reviews

were taken of the moſt diſtant Provinces; the Number, Names, Employments, Quality, Eſtates of their Inhabitants regiſter'd, [a] and all remarkable Acts and Occurrences tranſmitted to *Rome* the Capital of the World. In ſuch a State of affairs no great Event could lie conceal'd or be long call'd in queſtion: At ſuch a time therefore was it not proper to introduce this new ſurpriſing Scene upon the Stage of the World, whereby its Æra muſt be fix'd beyond all future Controverſy? Had *Chriſt* come in an obſcure or fabulous Age, by this time we might perhaps have doubted whether ever there was any ſuch Perſon; at leaſt whether any thing relating to him could be well depended on. It was by no means fit that a thing of this Conſequence ſhould be done in a Corner, and left to vulgar report and uncertain Tradition, to be ſoon dropt again, or blended and diſguis'd with Fiction and Romance: This therefore commenc'd in an Age of the World when the Copiouſneſs and Certainty of its Hiſtory ſerv'd both to ſpread it more univerſally, and preſerve it more ſecurely; *when many took in hand to ſet forth in order a Declaration of thoſe things which were moſt ſurely believ'd among them*, whereby we have more ample and

[a] See *Lardner's* Credibility, B. 2. c. 1. S. 2.

authentic

authentic Memoirs of Church Hiſtory than could ever have been expected before that Period; [b] and whereby the Time when, the Place where, and Perſons under whom the moſt material Occurences happen'd, were aſcertained and confirm'd by Writers of different Nations and Profeſſions; by *Romans*, *Jews* and *Greeks*.

Theſe ſeveral Circumſtances conſpire to bring the Miſſion of *Chriſt* very near the Time in which he came. There is one more which ſeems to fix it preciſely to that, at leaſt will ſhew that it could not be ſooner, conſiſtently with the common courſe of Providence, and moral Government of the World; admitting likewiſe the particular Scheme already ſpecify'd, *viz.* of his deſcending from the *Jews*; I mean the circumſtance of their then being in ſubjection to the *Roman* Government ſo far as to have the Power of Life and Death in moſt caſes taken from them [c]

[b] This is to be underſtood with an Exception to the thirty years between *Nero* and *Trajan*, to which time all the common complaint of Want of Eccleſiaſtical Writers ought I think to be limited. The cauſe of this is aſſign'd by *Vitringa* Obſerv. Sacr. L. 4. c. 7. S. 9. p. 904. *&c.*

[c] *John* 18. 31. How far this was ſo, ſee *Lardner*'s Credibility B. 1. c. 2. S. 5. par. 7. p. 49, *&c.* 2 Edit. The particular inſtance of St. *Stephen*'s Murder wich is brought to prove the contrary by the Authors of *Univerſ. Hiſt.* [v. 4. p. 236. Not. R.] does not ſeem ſufficient for that

By all that we know of that Generation we have reaſon to believe that if they had been at liberty, they would certainly have cut him off as ſoon as ever he appear'd to correct their groſs Errors and to reprove their many abuſes in Religion, to diſappoint all their fond Hopes of temporal Grandeur, Wealth and Power, and humble their ſpiritual Pride by reducing them to a level with all ſuch as feared God of every Nation under Heaven. And accordingly when they ſaw that he was not a *Meſſiah* for their purpoſe, [a] we find them immediately reſolv'd to ſeize and diſpatch him, as they would undoubtedly have done, if they had had ſufficient Power: but being in a great meaſure

purpoſe, but rather looks like an *Act* of the *Zealots*, though his Trial was begun regularly; [ſee *Baſnage*, B. 5. c. 2. S. 8.] and the Caſe of St. *Paul* mention'd in the ſame Book [N. O. p. 257.] ſeems to ſhew, not that they pretended to an *executive* Power in his time, but that even their *Judicial* one was then interrupted to prevent the like outrages. This point ſeems to be pretty exactly ſtated in *Millar*'s Ch. Hiſt. c. 7. p. 536. comp. *Baſnage* ibid. S. 7. One would think their own judgment of the thing might be inferr'd from *Hieros.* Sanhedr. fol. 18. col. 1. *Traditio eſt quadraginta annos ante excidium Templi ablatum fuiſſe jus vitæ et mortis.* et ib. fol. 242. *Quadraginta annis ante vaſtatum Templum ablata ſunt Judicia capitalia ab* ISRAELE. Though Dr. *Lightfoot* is of a different opinion, and produces ſeveral inſtances in confirmation of it, [op. Lat. v. 2. p. 371.] it muſt be confeſs'd that the learned Mr. *Biſcoe* [*Boyle*'s

deprived of it, they were obliged to have recourſe to Stratagem, continually laying wait for ſomething to accuſe him of to the *Romans*; tempting him, and trying all methods to draw him into any Act which might be conſtrued Treaſon or Diſaffection to their Government: on which account alſo we find him behaving with ſo much caution and reſerve before them; keeping in private as much as was poſſible and conſiſtent with the End for which he came; [b] charging his Diſciples not to make him known, [c] preventing his being proclaim'd the *Meſſiah*, [d] and declining any direct Anſwer when queſtion'd about it, [e] till he had finiſhed the Work

[*Boyle*'s Lect. c. 6.] has made it very probable that the *Jewiſh* Magiſtrates had often even in thoſe times the Power of inflicting capital Puniſhments allowed them; but yet he allows that they were often prevented by the *Roman* Governours; [ib. p. 225.] 'tis plain their State was about that Time in great Confuſion, and it appears that they durſt not exert ſuch a Power upon the occaſion above-mentioned, nor in their Circumſtances could at laſt have compaſſed our Saviour's Death in any regular judicial way without application to a *Roman* Governour, which comes to pretty near the ſame thing with reſpect to the main part of the preſent Argument.

[a] How ſoon their Rulers perceiv'd this, and what a different conduct it produced at firſt in them and that of the common People toward him, ſee in Mr. *Lardner*'s Credibility, V. 1. p. 288, *&c.*

[b] *Luke* 5. 16. *Joh.* 7. 1. 11. 54. [c] *Matt.* 12. 16.
[d] *Mark* 3. 12. *Luke* 4. 41. [e] *Joh.* 10. 24. 11. 4, *&c.*

of his Miniſtry, and fulfill'd every thing in the Scriptures concerning him.[a] No former Age of the *Jews* probably was wicked enough to have withſtood ſo many evident Proofs of his being the true *Meſſiah*, to have rejected him and been his Betrayers and Murderers, and thereby to have accompliſhed the Prophecies and executed the good purpoſe of God in ſending his Son to die for all the World: this Generation was ſo thoroughly ſuch † as to have done it with too much fury and precipitancy, unleſs reſtrain'd by a ſuperior Power: which

[a] See *Locke*'s Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, p. 487, *&c.* Fol. 3 Edit. [or *Lardner*'s Credibility, B. 1. c. 5. p. 286.] where may be found a full anſwer to the *Moral Philoſopher's* Obſervations on this Subject, V. 3. p. 189. Who concludes as uſual with a very falſe account of the Matter, *viz.* that 'our Saviour all along, from firſt to laſt' [witneſs *Mat.* 26. 64. *Mar.* 14. 62. *Luke* 22. 70. *Joh.* 18. 37.] diſclaim'd the Meſſiahſhip among them' *i.e.* the *Jews*. Comp. *Whitby* on *Matt.* 9. 30. The ſame account ſerves alſo to confute the Obſervation made upon theſe Paſſages by the Author of *Chriſtianity not founded on Argument*, who from thence infers that our Lord could *have no ſuch meaning as to convince by his Miraculous Works*, p. 48. *no ſuch Intention as to prove his own Truth and Character by theſe Inſtances of his Power*, ib. in full contradiction to thoſe many other Paſſages where he expreſsly appeals to the ſame *Works* as direct Proofs of his Divine Commiſſion: *Matt.* 11. 4, 5, 21. *Joh.* 5. 36. 10. 25, 38. 14. 11. 15. 24, *&c.* See Dr. from

† Vid. *Lightfoot.* Op. Lat. 317. 325. *&c.*

makes their Subjection to the *Roman* Government in this reſpect alſo to conſtitute the FULNESS OF TIME, and affords a Circumſtance particularly requiſite and ſuitable to the coming of *Chriſt*. And though this very remarkable Wickedneſs of the *Jews* in ſome meaſure counterballanc'd all their other Qualifications for attending to the *Chriſt* when he came, and debarr'd the generality of them from the Benefits of his Coming; yet it concurr'd equally to carry on the ſame Deſign of

Randolph's Anſw. p. 169, 170, *&c.* The ſame is likewiſe a reply to this Author's Objection againſt the Truth of Chriſtianity from *Chriſt*'s not opening his Commiſſion before the *Jewiſh* Rulers, [ibid. p. 48. *&c.*] as far as he has repreſented the caſe truly: for which ſee Mr. *Benſon*'s Anſw. Part 3. Dial. 3. p. 196, *&c.* The ſame Obſervation may be apply'd with no leſs force againſt our Saviour's doing the like before the *Roman* Governours, which ſtuck ſo much with *Woolſton*, [*exact Fitneſs.* Pref. *&c.*] to which we may add, that his addreſſing himſelf in form at any time to either of theſe muſt in all probability have been turn'd to a great Objection againſt the Truth of his Miſſion in after Ages whether they had, or had not receiv'd him; the firſt would have been wholly attributed to State Policy; the latter might have been urg'd as implying ſome extraordinary Defect in his Credentials. ſee *Benſon*, ib. p. 216, *&c.* So that had the whole been conducted in a way different from what it was, the caſe would, as far as now appears, have been no better for thoſe times in which it was tranſacted, and much worſe for all future ones.

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Providence for the common good of the World: even the Vice and Folly of them who were led to reject him contributed to the advantage and improvement of thoſe who had ſo much Virtue and Wiſdom left as to receive him; which great numbers of them did, [a] notwithſtanding the vile Policy of their Rulers: and this ſoon brought on that very thing which they were ſeeking to avoid by it, [b] the Diſſolution of their State, it having now fully anſwered the Ends it was deſign'd for as a Body Politic, and its Remains ſerving to better purpoſes in bearing everywhere ſuch evident Marks of the Divine Diſpleaſure as could not but be taken notice of, together with the Cauſes of their Puniſhment. And thus did the *Fall* of *Iſrael* become *the Riches of the World*, and riſe of a new greater Diſpenſation, communicated to all Nations and by this means moſt effectually confirm'd in every ſucceeding Generation: [c] of which below.

[a] V. *Jenkin*, V. 2. c. 32. p. 497.

[b] *Joh.* 11. 48.

[c] 'Had the *Jews* been all converted by JESUS 'CHRIST, we ſhould only have had doubtful witneſſes; 'and had they been quite deſtroy'd, we ſhould have had 'none at all'. *Paſchall*'s Thoughts, p. 121. comp. p. 89. 90.

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Thus have we conſider'd ſome of the moſt remarkable Circumſtances attending the Age of CHRIST's Advent, which when they are taken together make it appear to be the *Fulneſs of the Time*, and fitteſt for ſuch a Diſpenſation. I have omitted ſome Topics commonly made uſe of in this Argument, ſuch as that of an *Univerſal Peace* at that time, and the great *Expectation* of the *Meſſiah* among the *Jews*; ſince the one appears to be falſe [d] at leaſt 'twas foreign to his Birth [e] any otherwiſe than as a good Means for conveying the Tidings of it more eaſily and ſafely through the World, (in which ſenſe it was included under the Settlement of the *Roman* Empire, but that is not the ſenſe in which it is uſually inſiſted on) the other was not gratify'd in the manner in whch they did then expect him, but a quite different one; which therefore, ſo far as it was a wrong one, though it help'd to raiſe their attention to JESUS CHRIST at firſt, yet might be ſaid to tend as much afterwards to deaden and diſappoint it. We may

[d] See *Maſon*'s *Jani* Templum reſeratum, with *Buddeus* on the ſame Subject; or *Baſnage* Hiſt. Polit. Eccl. V. 1. p. 114. That the *Jews* had never leſs Peace among themſelves than at that time may be ſeen in *Joſephus*, *Philo* or *Univerſ. Hiſt.* V. 4. c. 11. p 196, *&c.*

[e] See *Woolſton*'s exact Fitneſs, *&c*, p. 91.

add,

add, that though the *Jews* had ſufficient ground for expecting ſuch a Perſon from their Prophetic Writings, and this expectation of theirs in general be a good Argument againſt them now to prove in what ſenſe their Forefathers did interpret ſome of theſe Writings; yet was this Expectation in itſelf (more eſpecially perverted as it then was) ſo far from being any particular qualification of the time, at leaſt any Circumſtance proper to confirm the Truth and Credibility of his Miſſion, that it might as well be ſuppoſed to have a contrary effect, in giving a handle to Impoſtors, as we find it actually did to two *Thudaſes*, to *Simeon Athronges*, *Judas of Galilee*, *Simon Magus*, *Doſitheus*,[a] and afterwards *Barcochebas* and many others.[b] Nor have I urg'd the *general notion* which prevail'd over moſt of the *World* of ſome *great Prince* that then was to appear; ſince this (were it never ſo conſiſtent with *Chriſt*'s real Character) can only prove that there was ſome Prophecy or other which might be ſo interpreted as to give occaſion to that Rumour, and the Objection

[a] V. *Origin* contra *Celſ.* L. 1. et 6. et *Calmet.* Dict.

[b] V. *Joſeph.* B. I. L. 2. c. 2. *&c.* A Liſt of them may be ſeen in *Kidder's* Dem. Part 3. p. 167, *&c.* Fol, or *Wagenſeil*'s Confutation of R. *Lipman*'s Carm. Memor. p. 233. *&c.*

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returns with equal force againſt its being prefixed to that time by any Prophecy: the Difficulty is ſtill the ſame, why had it not a more early date in Prophecy, which might have rais'd a proportionably more early expectation? — But this has been already accounted for.

Upon the whole, we may obſerve that from the beginning of the world, Mankind have always had ſufficient Means of being inſtructed in Religion, and that the ſeveral Diſpenſations have all along been ſuited to their reſpective Circumſtances and Capacities, as far as can be learnt from thoſe very brief accounts that are left us of their Hiſtory; from which 'tis alſo probable that if we had more full ones, we ſhould ſee this more clearly. In the INFANT State of the World Mankind were led as it were by the hand in matters of Religion, directed by viſible Appearances on every occaſion; fed with a preſent Portion of this World's Goods and cheriſhed with temporal Proſpects. The Doctrines of Religion and Modes of Worſhip were few and plain, agreeable to their imperfect Notions of things, and ſuited to their Simplicity of Manners; * and when theſe were once taught and inſtituted among ſome principal Heads of Families, they might through the longevity of

* See Part 3.

Men

Men in thoſe Days be eaſily held and handed down by Tradition. When Mankind had multiplied and were diſpers'd over all the face of the Earth, and *traditional Religion* (notwithſtanding the frequent revivals of it by particular Revelations) began to be corrupted and defaced, and as ſoon as a better way of preſerving and propagating the Notices of it was diſcover'd [a] *viz.* by the Invention, or perhaps Revelation of Letters, [b] God is pleas'd to afford more clear and ample ones; he ſingles out a Perſon particularly eminent for Faith and Obedience; takes him under his immediate protection by way of poſitive Covenant; communicates himſelf expreſsly to him, and makes him a means of diſcovering that Knowledge to other Nations, and reforming the Religion of every Country

[a] See Dr. *Conybeare*'s Def. of Rev. Rel. p. 404, &c.

[b] *Gale* [Court of the Gent. P. 1. B. 1. c. 10. S. 4.] brings many Teſtimonies both from *Heathen* and *Chriſtian* Writers to prove that *Moſes* was the Inventor of Letters. See alſo Gen. Dict. V. 6. p. 417. G. I. *Voſſius* Ariſtarch. 1. 9. *and an Eſſay upon Literature, proving that the two Tables written by the Finger of God in Mount* Sinai *was the firſt Writing in the World.* Lond. 1726. from which Author it appears how much Letters muſt have contributed to prevent the increaſe of Idolatry, at leaſt the advancing Men into the Number of Gods, by preſerving a more particular account of all their Actions. comp. *Univerſ. Hiſt.* p. 720. N. T. and *Daubuz* on the Revelation,

into which he was ſent. The ſame Favours are continued to ſome of his Poſterity and with the ſame deſign; they are removed to and fro, and every where miraculouſly preſerved, bleſs'd and multiplied; are united under a *Theocracy* and have a *written Law* given them, conſiſting of the moſt perfect Rules of Life that their then State and Temper would admit of, and containing a Body of Precepts oppoſite in moſt parts to the Superſtitious and Idolatrous practiſes of the People round them: they are inſtructed with a Hiſtory of the original State of the World, and all paſt Diſpenſations of Religion in it, together with Predictions of the future, more eſpecially of that great one under the *Meſſiah*, who was to deſcend from them, and whom they were taught to expect by

lation, Prelim. Diſc. p. 2, &c. which laſt Writer ſhews that it was as neceſſary then to give the *Iſraelites* Letters to ſupply the uſe of their Symbols, and take off their inclination to ſymbolical Idolatry, as it was afterwards to communicate the Art of *Printing* in order to correct a no leſs groſs Idolatry in the *Chriſtian* World by tranſmitting all uſeful Knowledge much more eaſily and univerſally than could have ever been done before by Writing, ib. p. 12. Many Proofs of God's having communicated the Art of Alphabetical Writing firſt to *Moſes*, as well as reaſons for that Conduct, have lately been ſet forth by Mr. *Worthington*, Eſſay c. 8. which we may expect to ſee ſupported with variety of Learning by Dr. *Winder*.

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numberleſs preparatory Types and Figures, all tending to point him out more fully to them, and pave the way for his Reception. They become a mighty Nation, are diſtinguiſh'd by extraordinary Deliverances, Succeſſes and Victories under their ſeveral Governours; the fame of them and of their God's ſpreads far and wide. To keep them duly attach'd to his Worſhip he raiſes up a ſucceſſion of Prophets who ceaſe not to warn, exhort and urge them to their Duty, and to reprove and correct them for their repeated Breaches of it; to remind them of their Dependence on that God who had already done ſo great things for them, and to aſſure them of ſtill greater upon their Obedience, as alſo to threaten them with the ſevereſt Puniſhments on their Defection: which always came to paſs accordingly, and were diſpens'd in ſo very viſible and exemplary a manner as could not but ſtrike ſurpriſe and terror into all the Nations round them, and plainly enough diſcover'd him to be not only a God of the *Jews*, but the ſupreme Governour of the World, and Lord of Heaven and Earth: which was the principal End of all; and to effect which their Prophets are often ſent to foretell the Fate of the neighbouring Kingdoms and to acquaint them with the Knowledge of the moſt High.

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This is the great Deſign which was ſtill carrying on, and which his own People, though they perverſely oppoſe and frequently endeavour to croſs it, are yet obliged to execute whether they will or no, and equally promote it by their Succeſſes and their Sufferings. They were to be like ſo much Leaven in the Maſs of Mankind, and when they were once thoroughly prepared themſelves he diſperſes them among all Nations to diffuſe the ſame Spirit and contribute to the Improvement and Reformation of others; and 'tis obſervable that the ſame long *Captivity* which cured moſt of them of their great proneneſs to Idolatry, ſerv'd alſo to diſtribute them over moſt parts of the World, and together with them the Knowledge and Worſhip of the one true God. [a] When at length

[a] It has been obſerv'd that the *Jews* were removed to *Babylon* when that Empire was in its moſt flouriſhing State and moſt frequented by Philoſophers [*Young*'s Hiſt. Diſſ. V. 1. p. 292.] and Legiſlators, who travel'd thither from all parts and thereby in a good meaſure became acquainted with the *Jewiſh* Hiſtory, as many of them are ſuppoſed to have been. [ſee the Authors above in Not. n.] And 'tis well known that at the end of this Captivity the greateſt part of them and thoſe of the greateſt eminence ſtaid behind and ſettled in *Chaldea*, *Aſſyria* and other eaſtern Provinces, notwithſtanding ſeveral Decrees granted by the Kings of *Perſia* for their return, [*Prid.* Part 1. B. 3. p. 136, *&c. Univerſ. Hiſt.* B. 2. c. 1. p. 5.] from whence

the *Jews* had attain'd to ſome tolerable ſenſe of Religion, and were ſo well attach'd to it, and confirm'd in their Hopes of the *Meſſiah*, as to be fit to communicate the ſame to the *Gentiles*, to whom they were by this time ſufficiently known; and theſe alſo by what they had heard of the *Jewiſh* Prophets and ſeen of their ſacred Books, together with their own Improvements in Philoſophy, were able to receive and reliſh a more perfect Inſtitution; when both *Jew* and *Gentile* had been prepared to expect a new Revelation; when they began to want it moſt, and were moſt ſenſible of their Wants, and therefore like to be the moſt diſpoſed to accept and apply the proper Remedy: and when the State of the World was ſuch as moſt of all favour'd the Communication and

'tis probable that ſome of their Deſcendants ſpread ſo far as the *Eaſt-Indies*, where their Poſterity continue to this day, as appears from the Accounts of many modern Travellers. We have a remarkable Paſſage to this purpoſe related by Dr. *Bundy* in the Preface to his Tranſlation of *Lamy*'s *Apparatus Biblicus*, as follows. 'The Rev. Mr. *Long* 'lately return'd from *Fort St. George* in the *Eaſt-Indies*, 'aſſures me and gives me leave to declare it to the World 'from him, that the *Gentous* (a People in the Eaſt, who 'from their Cuſtoms and other Circumſtances are by the 'moſt judicious believ'd to be the Deſcendants of thoſe of 'the *Jewiſh* Ten Tribes who never return'd from the '*Babyloniſh* Captivity) have a Temple at *Chillembrum* 'near

help'd to ſecure the Continuance of it; when the dark, fabulous Ages were well over, and ſucceeded by one remarkably learned and hiſtorical: when Arts and Sciences and Commerce had extended themſelves, together with the *Roman* Empire and Language, over moſt parts of the World, and thereby open'd a way for any new Diſcovery, and enabled Mankind in general with eaſe and expedition to ſearch into and thoroughly examine it; and more particularly, when that part of the World which was to be the ſcene of all this, had juſt been reduced to a *Roman* Province and thereby exact accounts were taken of its State and Inhabitants, ſo that the Perſon who was to work this great Reformation in Religion there could not long be hid from the reſt of the World; when the

' near *Porto Novo* on the Coaſt of *Coromandel*, which they ' call *Zuliman*'s Temple, which they reſort to with the ' ſame Devotion as the *Jews* formerly did to that at ' *Jeruſalem*, and that it is divided into Courts in the ſame ' manner as *Pere Lamy*'s is, and is built much after the ' ſame Plan which is there given.' An Account of *Jews* and *Jewiſh* Cuſtoms diſcover'd in *China*, *Bengal*, and *Madagaſcar*, as alſo in *Africa* and *America* both North and South, may be ſeen in the Authors referr'd to by *Jenkin*, V. 1. c. 2. p. 104, *&c.* and many more in *Fabricius*, Lux. Evang. from c. 32. to 50. or *Baſnage*'s Hiſt. B. 6. and 7. where we have an ample account of their being ſpread over all the four Quarters of the World.

Government of it had likewiſe been put under ſuch a form as was extremely ſuitable and even neceſſary to the due exerciſe and full execution of his Miniſtry: in this Period of the World *Chriſt* came; nor could he, as far as we can ſee, have come ſo opportunely at any other. Whoever attentively conſiders theſe ſeveral Circumſtances, though he may not perhaps allow every one of them, yet he will, I believe, find ſomething ſo remarkable in many, eſpecially in that extraordinary Coincidence of ſo many, as to induce him to think that there might be very good reaſon for deferring this Diſpenſation to ſo late a Period. And though I am very far from imagining this to be the whole of the caſe, or ſuppoſing that we can diſcover all the Reaſons of it, yet I truſt enow have been already pointed out to juſtify the Divine Conduct in this reſpect: at leaſt I hope we may be allow'd to ſay, that there is ſomething in them.

And thus it appears that God has all along acted equally for the good of Mankind in Matters of Religion, though in very different manners according to their different Circumſtances and Capacities; that his ſeveral Diſpenſations have been gradually open'd ſo as regularly to riſe out of and improve upon each other; and that the State of Knowledge and Perfection in the World

World has hitherto been perpetually *increasing*.

The very same Method might be shewn to be continued under *Christianity* itself, if it were not too much beyond the subject of this Discourse. It was in its *Infancy* in *Christ*'s time, who communicated the things of it to his Disciples by little and little, as they were able to bear them; [a] beginning with the plainest and most obvious; laying the foundation and first Principles of the Doctrine during his Ministry and Conversation with them after his Resurrection, [b] and leaving the more full opening of it till the Descent of the *Holy Ghost*; [c] which likewise led them gradually into its several Truths. For some time the Apostles themselves were ignorant of *Christ*'s true Office and the Nature of his Kingdom. They could not conceive that he was to suffer and die for the whole World, [d] they expected nothing but a temporal Prince, [e] and thought that his Kingdom was to be confined to a

[a] *Mark* 4. 33. *Joh.* 16. 12.

[b] *Acts* 1. 3. *Luke* 24. 27, - 44.

[c] As to the Fact, see the Bp. of *London*'s 3d Pastoral Let. S. 3. 4, and 6. for the Reasons of it, see Misc. Sacr. Ess. 1. p. 157, *&c.*

[d] *Matth.* 16. 22. *Luke* 18. 31. 34.

[e] *Matt.* 20, 21. *&c.*

remnant of the *Jews*.[f] Even after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt St. *Peter* wants a particular Revelation to convince him that the Gentiles were likewiſe to be admitted:[g] the Diſciples with him are aſtoniſhed that on *them* alſo was poured out the Gift of the *Holy Ghoſt*,[h] and others of the Brethren *contend* with him about it,[i] and afterwards prevail upon him to diſſemble it;[k] Many yet inſiſted on the point of *Circumciſion*,[l] and moſt of them concluded that *Chriſtianity* and the World itſelf would ſpeedily come to an end.[m] And though a much larger and more comprehenſive view of the whole Scheme was given by *Chriſt* himſelf, after his Aſcenſion, to St. *Paul*[n] that choſen Veſſel, who was endow'd with greater Accompliſhments and a larger ſtock of Learning, and who labour'd more abundantly than they all,[o]

[f] *Acts* 1.6. and c. 10. The uſe of this may be ſeen in Div. Leg. V.2. B.4. S.6. p.319, *&c.*

[g] *Acts* 10.6, *&c.* 11.5, *&c.* [h] *Acts* 10.45.

[i] *Acts* 11.2. [k] *Gal.* 2.11.13.

[l] *Acts* 15.1, 5.

[m] See *Burnet.* de Stat. Mort. et Reſ. c.7. p.145, *&c.*

[n] *Gal.* 1.16, *&c.* See Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 2. p.40, *&c.* and *Lock*'s Synops. to his Comment on *Epheſ.*

[o] 1 *Cor.* 15.10.

[p] Comp. *Rom.* 13.11. 1 *Cor.* 1.7. and 15.51. 2 *Cor.* 5, 2, 3, 4. and 1 *Theſſ.* 4.15, 16, 17. with *Grotius* and *Wall*'s note

yet perhaps it may be queſtion'd whether he alſo was not ſuffer'd to continue under the ſame error, or left in ſome degree of uncertainty about it, for ſome time. [p]

In this reſpect the *Chriſtian* Inſtitution may be ſaid to have been but in its *Childhood* even under the Apoſtles. We find it for ſome time mix'd with *Judaiſm* [q] and ſubject to carnal Ordinances: the Apoſtles of the Circumciſion ſeem not yet to have any diſtinct knowledge of the general freedom from the Ceremonial Law; [r] St. *Paul* is forced to conceal his Preaching to the Gentiles for ſeveral years, [s] a diſtinction of Days, [t] of Meats and Drinks [u] and other legal Ceremonies [w] are obſerv'd, to gratify the *Jewiſh* Converts, and avoid giving offence to the weaker Brethren; they are obliged to comply with ſuch in the Toleration of many things

note on the laſt place. add *Grot.* Append. ad Comm. de Antichriſto, Tom. 4. p. 475. *Lowth* on Inſpir. p. 255. 2 Edit. or *Benſon*'s Append. to Paraphr. on 1. *Tim.* 5. 23, *&c.*

[q] See *Edwards*'s Survey, p. 598, *&c.*

[r] *Acts* 21.26. ſee *Benſon*'s Hiſt. of the firſt Planting, V. 2. p. 209.

[s] *Gal.* 2. 2. ſee Pref. to Miſc. Sacr. p. 15. 26, *&c.*

[t] *Acts* 13.14. 16.13. *Coloſs.* 2.16.

[u] *Rom.* 14. 3. 1 *Cor.* 8. 13.

[w] *Acts* 16. 3.

burdenſome to the Fleſh and unprofitable as pertaining to the Conſcience; and the obſervance of ſome is judg'd neceſſary to be enjoin'd to certain *Proſelytes* by a public Decree.[x] The many Miracles and extraordinary *Gifts* of the Spirit which attended the Church at that time were no leſs evident ſigns of its Weakneſs, which ſtood in need of all theſe Interpoſitions, (as one well obſerves)[a] than the frequent appearance of *Angels* was under the former Adminiſtrations: Whereas afterwards in its more confirm'd and ſettled State, theſe *Helps*[b] became unneceſſary, the natural and ordinary Evidence, the regular and ſtated Methods of Inſtruction being abundantly ſufficient. The ſame Obſervation might be confirm'd from the frequent miſapplication of theſe very Gifts, ſo as to occaſion tumults and confuſion in the public Aſſembly (with reverence I ſpeak it) even in the midſt of that

[x] *Acts* 15. 28, 29. See *Benſon*'s Hiſt. of Planting *Chriſtianity*, V. 2. p. 56. where the beſt account ſeems to be given of that Decree from the 17 and 18 of *Levit.* See alſo Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 4.

[a] *Edwards*'s Survey, p. 600, 606, *&c.* add *Hicks*'s Spirit of Enthuſiaſm exorciſed, p. 27, - 30. The particular occaſion there was for each may be ſeen in Miſc. Sacr. Eſſ. 1, p. 153, *&c.*

[b] 1 *Cor.* 12. 28.

[c] 1 *Cor.* 14. ſee *Div. Leg.* V. 2. B. 4. S. 6. p. 320.

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plentiful effuſion of the Spirit, [c] inſomuch that they ſometimes *came together not for the better, but for the worſe.* [d] Even in thoſe days the *Myſtery of Iniquity* began to work, [e] many Factions and Schiſms aroſe, many Tares were ſown together with the good Seed, and often ſprang up with it and choaked it. No ſooner had *Chriſtianity* got well rid of the Yoke of the *Jewiſh* Law, than it was corrupted with *Jewiſh Fables* [f] and Traditions. The *Gentile* Converts were ſometime in laying aſide their old Errors and Superſtitions [g] and afterwards introduced an impure mixture of their *Philoſophy*; [h] this ſoon produced innumerable Sects and monſtrous *Hereſies*, which take up the greateſt part of the Hiſtory of thoſe times. [i] Inſtead of attending to the plain popular ſenſe of Scripture, they fly to fanciful Allegories, [k] raiſe multitudes of Myſteries, and maintain continual *oppoſition*

[d] 1 *Cor.* 11, 17. [e] 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 7.

[f] See *Baſnage*'s Hiſt of the *Jews*, B. 3. c. 22.

[g] See *Bingham*'s Ant. B. 16. c. 5.

See Bibl. Univerſ. Tom. 10. et *Cleric.* Ep. Crit. 4. 148, *&c.*

[i] See a ſummary account of it in *Le Clerc.* Ep. Crit. 4.

[k] 'Hunc (ſcil. *Philonem*) haud ita multo poſt culpabili
'affectatione ſequuti ſunt Patres et Scriptores Eccleſi-
'aſtici, tam ſuam quam lectorum operam ludentes: ſive
'quod is omnium primus annotata in Sacram Scripturam
'tentaret, ſive potius quod *Philonem* primo in hunc modum

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of Science falſly ſo call'd. For under all their ſhew of Science not much ſolidity or real Knowledge, not much true Learning is to be met with; nor indeed had they much room to cultivate it in thoſe times. — And though the whole Scheme of our Redemption was compleatly delivered, and all its eſſential parts recorded during the extraordinary Aſſiſtance and Inſpection of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and in ſome reſpects the primitive *Chriſtians* ſeem to have the advantage of others, as being better acquainted with the Stile in which it was wrote, and ſome Apoſtolical Traditions which gave light to it:[1] yet it by no means follows that the true Genius and Extent of this Revelation muſt be as well underſtood by the generality of them, as it could be by any that came after them. What

' ſcribentem repererint: Certum ſane eſt eum *Chriſtianis* ' Scriptoribus diu plurimum arriſiſſe; quorum nonnulli ' eûm adeo ad amuſſim imitari ambiebant, ut ſacra ' volumina, alioquin in ſe perſpicua, foede obſcurarint, ' obductaque allegoriarum ſuarum fuligine minus ſincera ' præbuerint.' *Lightfoot* Op. Tom. 2. p. 848.

[1] Which yet is but of very little weight, as may be ſeen in *Le Clerc* Ep. Crit. 4. p. 146, &c. or *Whitby*, Diſſert. de S. Scr. Interp. paſſim. ' Sunt equidem qui ſentiunt ' Patres eo quod N. Teſtamenti Scriptoribus propriores ' eſſent idoneos magis fuiſſe ſenſus Scripturæ Judices, ſive ' Interpretes; quod tamen falſiſſimum eſſe experientia ' duce compertum eſt. Ex trium enim primorum ſeculorum ' ſcriptoribus haud pauca in hoc opere congeſſimus ab ' omni

our Saviour ſaid of *John* the Baptiſt, that *the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he*, greater in his Knowledge of the Nature and Conſtitution of that Kingdom; the ſame may be ſaid of common *Chriſtians* in that Period; many of leſs merit and lower abilities, but living in a more enlighten'd Age, might eaſily prove equal, if not ſuperior to them in what may be call'd the *Theory*, or ſpeculative part of their Religion, with regard to which only I would always be underſtood. The plain fundamental Doctrines and Rules of Life were then no doubt (as they have always been) well known, and theſe they took good care to act up to, and deſerve this Character, that they lived much better than they reaſon'd.[m] Though perhaps even thus much can only be

'omni veritatis ſpecie aliena. Oſtendant nobis Patrum 'Patroni unam Scripturæ Pericopen, quæ alias obſcura 'cum eſſet, ab iis ſit lucem mutuata. Hoc autem admi- 'randa Dei providentia contigiſſe exiſtimo, ne ex humano 'judicio Divinarum Scripturarum authoritas penderet. Niſi 'enim experientiâ ſcientiæ magiſtrâ compertum eſſet 'Patres primævos et Apoſtolis propriores, haud minus 'quam cæteri, cæſpitaſſe, pronum eſſet propter inſignem 'eorum Pietatem et dona quorundam ſpiritualia eorum 'veſtigiis inſtitiſſe.' *Whitby* ib. Epil. p. 346.

[m] See *Le Clerc*'s Eccl. Hiſt. of 2 firſt Cent. paſſ. and Ep. Crit. et Eccl. Ep. 4. or *Daille* or *Barbyrac* Pref. to *Pufendorf*, and Spirit of Eccleſiaſtics. *Whitby* Diſſert. in Pref.

affirm'd of them in the very primitive times, during the extraordinary aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and whilſt the original Evidence was clear and cogent, and its Impreſſions ſtrong and lively upon them; while they believ'd that the World was juſt at an end, however like to end ſoon with themſelves by reaſon of the many Dangers, Difficulties and Diſtreſſes to which they were daily expoſed: from which extraordinary caſes we are not to form our Notions of the State of any Inſtitution, as was obſerv'd in the beginning. * Nor are ſuch any Objection to the gradual Progreſs of Religion here ſuppoſed. Neither were the firſt Chriſtians different from other men as ſoon as theſe ex-

Præf. S. 4, 5, *&c.* et Epilog. Bp. *Taylor*'s Liberty of Prophecying, c. 8. *Ibbot*'s *Boyle*'s Lect. Part 2. Serm. 4. or *Edwards*'s Free Diſc. on Truth and Error, c. 7. or his *Patrologia* Poſth. Tr. 1. at the end of which is a Catalogue of Authors that have freely cenſur'd the *Fathers*. *Buddeus* in his Judgement of *Le Clerc* [de Theolog. Patriſt. Iſag. L. 2. c. 3. S. 3. p. 489.] ſeems to own that the learning of the generality of the Fathers is to be rated according to the Times in which they lived, and that thoſe were much inferior to our own in this reſpect, which is all that I am here concern'd for. Vid. *Bud.* ib. S. 10. p. 508. add *Dodwel* Diſſ. in *Iren.* Præf. et. Diſſ. 1. or *Wotton*'s Reflections, c. 29. p. 389, *&c.* 2 Ed.

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traordinary Hopes and Terrors ceaſed; [mm] as ſoon as they were at eaſe in the World, and left to the common courſe of it, and once became involv'd in all its Faſhions, Forms and Intereſts, having all along *this treaſure in earthen Veſſels*, that the *Excellency of the Power might be of God and not of them.* [n]

[mm] Ως δ' ο ιερος των Αποστολων χορος διαφορων ειληφει τον βιον τελος, παρεληλυθει τε ηγενεα εκεινη των αυταις ακοαις της εν θεον σοφιας επακουσαι κατηξιωμενων, τηνικαυτα της αθεου πλανης την αρχην ελαμβανεν η συστασις, δια της των ετεροδιδασκαλων απατης, οι και ατε μηδενος ετι των Αποστολων λειπομενου, γυμνη λοιπον ηδη τη κεφαλη, τω της αληθειας κηρυγματι την ψευδωνυμον γνωσιν αντικηρυττειν επεχειρουν. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. L. 3. c. 26. — 'Reformations 'in Religion will ſometimes laſt long with regard to 'ſpeculative Doctrines; but with reſpect to practical 'Morality, they ſoon attain to Perfection and their full 'growth; and this is ſucceeded by a ſudden Depravation 'of Manners, and a ſtate of ſo much corruption as would 'require a new Reformation. The ſtrict Morals or Be-'haviour of the primitive Chriſtians; their Sobriety, 'Chaſtity, Humility, &c. ſhone in their greateſt ſplendour 'during the Lives of the Apoſtles; but degenerated ſo 'much daily from the period in queſtion, that there was 'no difference in the fourth Century between the Man-'ners and Conduct of the Chriſtians and thoſe of other 'People.' *Bayle* Gen. Dict. V. 7. comp. *Moyle*'s Works, V. 2. p. 204, &c. with *Vitringa*'s Diſertation on the State of the Church from *Nero*'s time till *Trajan*. Obſerv. Sac. L. 4. c. 7. 8.

[n] 'It is with Religion as it is with Arts and Sciences, 'the firſt Eſſays are ſeldom perfect; they arrive not to 'their

When *Chriſtianity* comes to be eſtabliſh'd in he *Roman Empire* it partakes of its Pomp and Pageantry, and ſoon admits the Pagan Ceremonies. [nn] We find it immediately ſplit into new Hereſies and Schiſms, torn with ambitious Conteſts and Struggles for Power: [o] perplexing Doubts and Difficulties rais'd in points of Doctrine, ſubtle Diſtinctions and nice Refinements made in its Precepts, and both often confound-

'their height at firſt, they require a gradual Improve-
'ment. And ſo it is here: the primitive *Chriſtians* were
'not grown up to that perfection of Knowledge and
'Underſtanding which was deſign'd by the Author of
'of our Religion. *Chriſtianity* was in its Infancy, at moſt
'in its Childhood, when theſe men wrote, and therefore
'it is no wonder that they *ſpake as Children*, that they
'*underſtood as Children*, that they *thought as Children*.
'This was according to the Oeconomy they were then
'under. And beſides they had not time and leiſure to
'ſearch into the *Chriſtian* Doctrines, nor had they laid
'in a ſufficient ſtock and fund for that purpoſe, they
'being but newly adopted into the *Chriſtian* Church:
'yet they were willing to appear in its behalf, to defend
'it as well as they could, which was accepted by Hea-
'ven.' *Edwards*'s Patrologia, p. 57. 'Let me not be
'cenſur'd though I ſhould be ſo bold as to ſay that we
'ſhould have underſtood the Scriptures much better if we
'had not had the Writings of the Fathers; for they have
'obſcured and depraved them by their different and con-
'trary Comments; They have raiſed Controverſies,
'they have taught men to quarrel and diſpute about the
'ſenſe of many Texts which otherwiſe are plain and

ob-

ed in many an idle Controverſy: [p] till at length almoſt the whole Church of *Chriſt* ſeems to be overwhelm'd with *Popery* and *Mahometaniſm*, for which indeed it was too fully ripe. [q] Though perhaps the latter of theſe two (notwithſtanding the mixture of Impoſture in it) may appear to have been in the main a very conſiderable Reformation [r] [concerning the former, ſee N. [z] below.]

[c] obvious, and about ſeveral matters of practice which [c] are evident enough in themſelves, ſome of which are [c] ſuperſtitious, &c. ib. p. 135.

[nn] See Dr. *Middleton*'s Letter from *Rome* 4th Edit. [c] Imperio ad fidem adducto, ſed et Imperii pompa Eccle- [c] ſiam inficiente: Ethnicis ad Chriſtum converſis, ſed [c] et Chriſti religione ad Ethnicæ formam depravata, &c. *Turetin* de variis Chr. Rel. Fatis. Orat. Acad.

[o] V. *Ammian.* Mar. L. 15. et 27. *Socr.* Eccl. H. L. 1. c. 22. 23.

[p] See *Barbyrac* Præf. to Puf. S. 19. *Ut in illis temporibus*, ſays *Eraſmus* very juſtly, *ingenioſa res fuit eſſe Chriſtianum.* add *Euſeb.* de Vit. *Conſtant.* L. 2. c. 61.

[q] See *Sale*'s Prelim. Diſc. to the *Koran*, Sect. 2. add *Grot.* de *Ver. R. C.* L. 6. c. 1.

[r] All Authors agree that what gave *Mahomet* the greateſt room to advance his new Religion was the diſtracted, ignorant, corrupt ſtate of the Eaſtern Church at that time; the miſerable Contentions and moſt horrid Perſecutions on every Religious pretence, the diſſoluteneſs of all Sects and Parties: and 'tis evident that he contributed not only to reform the Morals of a great part of the World, but likewiſe reduced them from Polytheiſm

and

But this is a Subject too diſagreeable to dwell upon; nor am I inclined to aggravate the Imperfections of paſt Ages. All that I would obſerve is what appears from the moſt tranſient view of Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, namely that the riſe and progreſs of *Chriſtianity* has in the main been ſimilar to that of all other Diſpenſations; that both the Name of *Chriſt* and the Nature of his Religion were diſcover'd, or as we may ſay, both the *external* and *internal* Propagation of *Chriſtianity* was carried on in the ſame gradual manner.

and groſs Idolatry to the belief and Worſhip of one God; which was the principal Doctrine he ſet out with at firſt, and gain'd great Reputation by, and which he made the ground of his pretended Miſſion. His Syſtem contains a great deal of pure *Chriſtianity*, it enforces the Virtues of Charity, Temperance, Juſtice and Fidelity in the ſtrongeſt manner, it prohibits Extortion and all kinds of Cruelty, even to Brutes, and binds its Votaries to the ſtricteſt Order, Regularity and Devotion. Several Sects of them believe in *Chriſt*. [v. *D. Millius* de Rel. *Moham.* Diſſ. 10. p. 344, *&c.* *Reland* de R. M. p. 25, *&c.* and Sir *P. Ricaut*'s Hiſt, B. 2. c. 11, *&c.* or *Millar*, p. 230.] and entertain as worthy Notions of him to the full as ſome of the *Papiſts* do [ſee *L' Alcoran des Cordeliers*, and *Bayle* Gen. Dict. p. 326. B.] One may ſee to what height the *Romiſh* Corruptions were grown in *Mahomet*'s time by his reproaching the *Chriſtians* with their aſſociating to God their Doctors and Monks [*Alcoran*, 9. 31.] and by his ſurpriſing miſtake of the Virgin *Mary* for the third Perſon in the *Trinity*: [ſee *Reland*'s 4 Treaties on *Mahom.* p. 174, *&c.* or *Sale*'s Prelim-

As to the firſt. The *Jews* who had before been made uſe of to ſpread the Knowledge of the true God and his Providence and prepare men for a more noble Inſtitution by their frequent Diſperſions all over the Eaſt, are here much more ſo (when they were much better qualify'd for it and leſs liable than ever to be corrupted by the Heathen among whom ſome of them were ſo long to converſe [s]) by their Diſperſion over the whole World at the Deſtruction of their Temple and Government by *Titus*, and under the following Emperors,

Prelim. Diſc. p. 35. and his *Koran.* c. 5. p. 98] and what havock thoſe moſt lamentable Controverſies on this Subject made, appears from the Confeſſion of a learned Writer, who tells us, that obliged him to drop his Deſign of giving us the Hiſtory of theſe Churches. Pref. to *Prid.* Life of *Mahomet.*

[s] See *Le Clerc*'s Cauſes of Incredulity, p. 264, &c. In fact none of them that we know of, however bad they were and are in other reſpects, have fallen from their own God to the Idolatrous Worſhip of their Neighbours any where, during this their moſt miſerable Diſperſion, their ſeeming ſo long to be utterly rejected by him, a tenth part of which ſuffering would have totally deſtroy'd the very Name of them in any former times. This muſt be thought a little remakable by every one who thinks at all about it. Nor has their caſe been leſs extraordinry in Chriſtian Countries, where they have never been permitted to reſt long in any Kingdom, where frequently in every Age men's eyes are turn'd upon them by ſome new general Perſecution; and yet notwithſtanding all this they

eſpecially *Adrian*, [t] and thereby every where publiſh and prove the Truth of their own, as well as the Goſpel Propheſies, [u] and become the beſt Evidences, becauſe unwilling ones, in favour of the *Chriſtian* Religion. And as the *Roman* Empire by its increaſe and ſettlement at the time of *Chriſt*'s coming contributed remarkably to this ſame end, ſo did it no leſs afterward by its Decline and Diſſolution, at which time *Chriſtianity* was ſcatter'd abroad with it among the *Northern* Nations, and carried to the remoteſt Iſles, in the ſame manner as the *Grecian* Arts

are univerſally believ'd to be more numerous in the whole at preſent than they have ever been in their moſt flouriſhing eſtate in their own Land.

[t] He ſold them at Fairs for the ſame price as Horſes [*Hier.* in *Jer.* p. 342.] and would not ſuffer any of them ſo much as to ſet foot in or come in view of *Jeruſalem*, ſay ſome [*Aug.* Civ. D. L. 16. c. 21. *Hil.* in *Pſ.* 48.] or of any part of *Judea*, according to others. [*Hier.* in *Dan.* 595. *Tert. Apol.* c. 21.] Nor could they obtain even this privilege from any of the ſucceeding Emperors (except *Julian*) but with great difficulty, and only for one Day in a year to ſee and bewail its [illegible]ns, and that upon paying a conſiderable Sum. *Univ. Hiſt.* B. 3. p. 40. *Echard.* Eccl. Hiſt. 465. *&c. Euſeb.* Eccl. Hiſt. 21. 6. comp. *Baſnage* Hiſt. I. B. 6. c. 9. S. 28, 29. et *Witſii* Exerc. Acad. 12. 16. [u] Thus all the Attempts of that perfidious Nation [u] towards the recovery of their former Condition ſerved [u] only to heighten and aggravate thoſe Calamities with [u] which they had been ſo often threatned by the Prophets, [u] and to reduce them to the deplorable State in which [u] we now ſee them, being a Crew of contemptible Vaga-

[u] bonds

had been dispers'd over *Asia* upon the dissolution of *Alexander*'s Empire.

By these and the like means was the Gospel divulg'd every where, and the sound of it might be said without an Hyperbole to have *gone into all the Earth, and its Words unto the ends of the World:* [w] and where it has prevailed, it prevail'd more entirely than any other Religion could, which (as an excellent Author observes,*) makes a great abatement in the Disproportion that Heathenism in general may seem to have in its numbers above Christianity. And though some Nations at first view seem to have quite

' bonds dispersed all over the World, without King, ' Temple or Pontiff; driven from their own Countrey, ' and not daring to set foot in it even as Passengers and ' Strangers. The Edict of *Adrian* excluding all *Jews* from ' *Jerusalem*, extended to such of them as had embraced ' the *Christian* Religion, so that they too being obliged ' to quit the City, the Church was by that means deliver'd ' from the Servitude of the Law; for till that time, not ' only the Bishops of *Jerusalem* had been chosen from ' among the circumcised *Christians*, but all the converted ' *Jews* joined to the observance of the Gospel that of the ' Law.' *Univ. Hist.* ib. p. 41.

[u] *Deut.* 28. *Matt.* 23. 35, 38, &c. *Luke* 21. 24. *Deut.* 32. 21. *Rom.* 10. 19. *Jer.* 15. 4. 25. 9. *Hos.* 3. 4. In what a remarkable manner every Curse described by *Moses* has been to the full inflicted on that still miserable People, may be seen in *Patrick* upon *Deut.* 28.

[w] *Rom.* 10. 18. See the Authors below.

* *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 347.

loſt it again, or greatly abuſed and corrupted it; yet upon a more ſtrict ſurvey, we diſcover a great deal of it mixed in their ſeveral Syſtems, and hid under different Names, which we have reaſon to think, will at length be found of them more fully, and like Seed ſown revive in its own ſeaſon. Nor is it now in ſo narrow a compaſs as is generally imagined. [x] Though there be many large Countries where it is not eſtabliſhed or formally profeſs'd, yet are there ſome traces both of this and former Revelations in moſt Parts of the World, as appears from ſeveral Modern Writers: [y] and though we often find it blended with impure Rites, and groſs Superſtitions among a barbarous People; yet at the ſame time we find that it has had a very conſiderable effect even upon them, and will we truſt in time lead them to a more pure and perfect Profeſſion of it, when they become ripe for ſuch a Manifeſtation: and as ſome Corruptions both in the Natural and Civil Body generally make way for a more perfect Soundneſs and thorough Reformation, and then

[x] V. *Fabricii* Lux Evang. toti orbi exoriens. c. 36, *&c.* or *Millar*'s Hiſt. of Propag. c. 7. 8, *&c.*

[y] See many of them cited and more referr'd to by *Jenkin*, *Fabricius* and *Millar*. add *Young*'s Hiſt. Diſſ. V. 2. p. 218, *&c.*

are

are themſelves cured: ſo may it be in the Body Spiritual. Thus that thick Cloud of *Popery* which has been ſo long hanging over the Weſtern Church, made way for a brighter Light perhaps than ever at the *Reformation*, * (which help'd greatly to amend at leaſt the Diſcipline of that very Church who refuſed to admit any material Alteration in her Doctrines †) and may ſtill by its reſemblance to the Worſhip of *Heathens* lead them more eaſily and inſenſibly out of their groſſer Errors, and be no improper introduction to a more pure Religion among them, and when it has ſerved that end, its own Idolatrys be aboliſhed and by its Judgements alarm and convince the *Jews* (to whom it has been hitherto a Rock of Offence) and ſo make way for a ſtill purer, as well as more enlarged eſtate of *Chriſtianity* among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. [z] But not to dwell on conjectures; this we know aſſuredly, that every People, Nation and Language ſhall at laſt embrace the true Religion, and all

* See *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 152, *&c.*

† See *Hakewill*'s Apology p. 547.

[z] See *Edwards*'s Survey, p. 715. or *Scott*'s Chriſtian Life, Part 2. V. 2. c. 7. p. 489. Some great end will moſt undoubtedly be ſerv'd by the permiſſion of *Popery* ſo long even after the *Myſtery* of its *Iniquity* is ſeen through by

Kingdoms of the World become the Kingdoms of Chriſt. [a]

Secondly. As to what may be called more particularly the internal Propagation of *Chriſtianity*, or the Comprehenſion of the whole Goſpel Scheme, the ſame method is carried on, though not in ſo viſible a manner or capable of being diſtinguiſhed by ſuch remarkable Periods. That perfect *Analogy* between Religion and the common courſe of Nature, which has been ſo beautifully diſplay'd by a late excellent Writer † holds no leſs true I believe in this reſpect, and

the generality of its own Profeſſors, as ſeems to be in a great meaſure the caſe at preſent. Even during its darkeſt Ages, which afford the very ſtrongeſt Objection to that *Progreſs* in Religion we ſuppoſe, *Chriſtianity* was ſtill ſpreading wider and wider in the more diſtant parts of the World, and where *Popiſh* Converts now become the Seed of *Chriſtians*, who may not improperly be compared to the Proſelytes of the Gate among the *Jews*, being probably the firſt fruits of the Harveſt God intends to have among the Heathens of thoſe Parts, and after they are fully converted may be moſt ſervicable to promote the Converſion of others. [ſee *Jurieu*. Pref. to Accompl. of Proph. or *Millar* 2V. p. 230. 364.] We may affirm that *Popery* there is ſtill better than *Paganiſm*, and by its ſo great reſemblance of the Pagan Superſtitions (particularly in the point of Images) it more eaſily inſinuates itſelf among ſuch People, and may be conſider'd therefore in ſome reſpects as no very unfit Introduction to a more per-

† The Ld. Bp. of *Briſtol*.

that as all Arts and Sciences, every inprovement in natural and civil Life are ſtill drawing nearer to perfection, as we become daily better acquainted with the Syſtem of the World, as well as that of the Univerſe, with the nature of the Heavens and Earth, with that of our own Body and Mind; in ſhort, as every branch of knowledge has been all along enlarging and improving itſelf, and every ſucceſſive Age not only enjoys the Diſcoveries of the foregoing, but adds ſtill greater and more valuable ones of its own; ‡ ſo it is probable that the Knowledge of Religion alone

perfect State of Religion in future Ages, whenever they ſhall become capable of it. ſee *Colliber*'s Impartial Enquiry, p. 138. 2 Edit. with *Gage*'s Survey of the *Weſt-Indies*.

* *Pſ.* 2. 8. 22. 27. 72. 11. 86. 9. *Iſai.* c. 2. 2. c. 9. 7. c. 11. 9-11. c. 40. 5. c. 49. 6. c. 52. 10. c. 55. 5. c. 56. 7. c. 60. 12. c. 66. 18, 22. *Ezek.* 39. 23. 29. *Dan.* 2. 44. 7. 14, 27. *Hoſ.* 1. 10. 3. 4. *Mich.* 5. 4. *Am.* 9. 14. *Zeph.* 3. 9. *Zech.* 9. 10. 12. 10. 14. 9. *Mal.* 1. 11. *Matt.* 24. 14. *Mark* 13. 10. *Luke* 3. 6. 21. 24. *Acts* 13. 47. *Rom.* 8. 19, &c. 11. 25. 14. 11, &c. 1 *Cor.* 15. 25. 2 *Cor.* 3. 14, &c. *Rev.* 11. 15. 14. 6. From ſuch Texts as theſe Mr. *Worthington* infers that the Kingdom of *Chriſt* will be an *Univerſal Theocracy*, whereof that under the *Jews* was in ſome reſpects typical, *Eſſ.* 292, &c. Where there ſhall be univerſal *Holineſs* 302. and Obedience to the Goſpel Precepts in their ſtricteſt ſenſe, 309. and either an *Univerſal Language* or a perfect *Union*, in Faith and Worſhip, 308.

‡ See Part. 3.

is not at a ſtand; but on the contrary, that as we continaally advance in the ſtudy of GOD'S Works, ſo we ſhall come to a proportionably better underſtanding of his *Word*: As by all theſe means Human Reaſon is ſtill growing more perfect, ſo by the ſame means Divine Revelation will gradually clear up, and *Chriſtianity* itſelf draw nearer to its *fulneſs*. What is here ſuppoſed has been remarkably confirm'd in fact ſince the *Reformation*, about which time theſe two extraordinary Diſcoveries of *Printing* and the uſe of the *Compaſs* in *Europe* jointly contributed to the Diſperſion of Learning and Enlarging of *Commerce* over the World; and at the ſame time gave a new publication of *Chriſtianity* and in much greater Purity than it had been in before for many Centuries. Ever ſince which time all three have been continually gaining ground. New light has been given to the Prophetic and other more abſtruſe parts of Scripture in every ſucceſſive Age and almoſt by every Writer, as a very able Judge aſſures us.[a] The Grounds of our Religion are in general much better underſtood, more clearly and rationally explain'd and vindicated; and from what appears at preſent we have reaſon

[a] *Newton* on *Daniel* c. 1.

to

to think they will be ſtill more and more ſo. [b] We may venture to ſay that in our own Nation there never were more free and worthy Notions of God and his Providence; nor were the Deſigns and various Diſpenſations of Religion ever generally ſo well underſtood

[b] 'At tandem, ſuperiore præſertim ſeculo et hoc noſtro, 'cum Diſciplinæ omnes et quæ pertinent ad Antiquitatis 'Linguarumque demortuarum intelligentiam, et quæ 'rerum ipſarum cognitionem tradunt, et quæ veri in 'quavis arte inveniendi ac exponendi rationem docent, 'ad multo majorem perfectionem adductæ eſſent; anti-'quiſſima illa Religionis Divinitus revelatæ monumenta 'multo melius explicari, certioraque ex iis conſectaria 'duci, Capitaque omnia Theologica rectius tradi cæperunt 'quam unquam antea ab Apoſtolorum ætate factum fuerat. 'Quod multo citius contigiſſet, ſi Majores noſtri Judicio 'ſuo malluiſſent uti quam alieno; neque enim ingenia 'defuiſſe puto poſterioribus ſeculis, ſed artem duntaxat, 'quæ nimia cæcaque admiratione priorum oppreſſa jacebat. 'Quare contigit idem Theologiæ Chriſtianæ quod Phi-'loſophiæ; quæ tum demum cum fructu, ut par erat 'excoli et perfici cæpit cum homines cæpere recordari, 'ſibi Rationem non minus eſſe datam quam *Ariſtoteli*; 'excuſſaque admiratione Antiquitatis, Dogmata ejus ad 'examen revocare. Ut igitur qui nunc pulcherrima 'Recentiorum in Philoſophia inventa oblivioni mandari 'vellent ut *Ariſtotelea* Decreta ſola iterum obtinerent, 'tenebras luci præferre merito cenſerentur: ita qui nunc 'nos revocant ad Elementa ac prima veluti tentamina '*Patrum* Græcorum aut Latinorum, pluriſque ea fieri 'volunt quam quæ nunc ſcimus, ii virum adultæ ætatis

'per-

as at preſent. Never was Learning and real Knowledge ſo fully and equally diſpers'd among all Parties and Profeſſions of Men. Nor is there any Sect, however wild and extragavagant it may have been at its firſt ſetting out, but evidently partakes of theſe Improvements. And though while the minds of Men are warm and eager in the queſt of Truth, while they are in continual agitation and daily teeming with new Inventions, many Monſters will ſpring up (as may naturally enough be expected) together with it, and ſtrange Errors and Abſurdities be advanc'd in ſuch full Freedom of Enquiry and Debate; and though this Increaſe of Knowledge be attended with an Increaſe of Libertiniſm and Extravagance of all kinds, and an Evil Spirit of Infidelity and Prophaneneſs be at the ſame

'pertinaci ſtudio longaque experientia edoctum ad pueri-
'tiæ ruditatem redire volunt, majorique in pretio habere
'quæ puer animo agitabat, quam quæ adultus maturo
'judicio penſitavit. *Inimici ſunt Profectus omnis in ſacris*
'*Literis, adeoque ipſius Veritatis. Talenta Divinitus nobis*
'*data et nuper mirum in modum aucta minuere atque in-*
'*fodere omni ope conantur. Quod ab iis perfici nec Deus,*
'*nec Homines ſinent donec in aliquo terrarum angulo Literæ*
'*et Veritatis amor vigebunt.*' *Clerc.* Ep. Crit. 4. p. 151, *&c.*
comp. *Ibbot*'s B. Lect. 2 Part Serm. 4. p. 119. and *Lactant.* de Orig. Err. L. 2. S. 7. To which we may be added *Wotton*'s two excellent Chapters on the *Philological* and *Theo-*

time gone abroad; yet is this neither ſo uncommon or unconformable to the courſe of Divine Providence in other reſpects as to make us deſpair of ſeeing it attended with the uſual Conſequences: We have ſtill reaſon to truſt that when Truth and Knowledge have once fully got the better of Error and Superſtition, this Spirit of Reformation will at length reform and rectify itſelf, and we ſhall have more and more of the true Life and Spirit of our Religion as we draw nearer to thoſe times wherein the ſure Word of Prophecy has fix'd its Reign.

I am far from imagining that *Chriſtianity* is yet come to its mature ſtate, that it is underſtood in the whole extent, or held in its utmoſt purity and perfection by any particular Church [c]. But as when it was firſt preached Men were fit

Theological Learning of the *Moderns*. Reſl. c. 28, and 29. and *Worthington*'s Eſſay, c. 8.

[c] 'It will not be thought any imputation on *Chriſtia-* 'nity that all its Myſteries and Doctrines have not been 'as yet ſo fully diſcover'd and underſtood by the ſeveral 'Sects and Parties of *Chriſtians*, as to come to a ſettled 'Agreement concerning them, if it be conſidered that 'no human Science hath been brought to ſuch perfection 'as not to admit of farther Improvements, many of 'which began to be cultivated long before the Com- 'mencement of *Chriſtianity*.' Pref. to Mr. *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 7.

to

to hear and profit by it in a competent Degree, (as we have ſhown) as that was a very proper time to divulge it, in order to improve the World, which it did very conſiderably * excelling all former Diſpenſations of Religion, and Syſtems of Science, refining the Notions, even of thoſe who did not formally receive it, [a] and yet was itſelf for ſomewhile but partially communicated [b] and imperfectly underſtood: So now, 'tis of much greater advantage to the World in general, and yet ſtill capable of encreaſe; it waits for its own Fulneſs, nor ſhall Mankind receive the proper influence and advantage of it till their Minds be much farther open'd, their Reaſon more fully exerciſed in this great Myſtery of Divine Love. We muſt ſure be ſenſible that the Scriptures are very far from being thoroughly underſtood by us, who are of ſo reform'd a Church, live under ſuch

* See the Bp. of *London*'s 2d Paſtoral Letter, or *Worthington*'s Eſſay, c. 7.

[a] This is very viſible in the Writings of thoſe Philoſophers who came after its promulgation, as *Epictetus*, *Plutarch*, *Max. Tyr.* and more eſpecially *M. Antoninus*, who is well acquainted with the *Chriſtian* Virtue of *Humility*, among many others, and frequently inſiſts upon it. The like may be obſerv'd of *Porphyry* and *Hierocles* [ſee paſſages in *Burnet* de Fid. et Off. p. 29.] as alſo in *Seneca* [ſee *Lamott*'s Enquiry into his Religion: Works of the Learned

ſo

an excellent Government, and in this enlighten'd Age, not even thoſe parts of them which treat of paſt States and Diſpenſations, much leſs thoſe which regard Futurity. How long is it ſince men were ſo very ignorant of its Doctrines as to fix that horrid one of *Abſolute Reprobation* upon St. *Paul* himſelf? and 'tis to be fear'd that almoſt as hard things are yet believ'd of him and other inſpired Writers. We are ſtill apt to confine the Goſpel of our Lord, as his primitive Diſciples ſometime did, to particular Nations, Churches, Sects, Opinions; to contend vehemently either about things in their own Nature abſtruſe and difficult to be underſtood, and therefore leſs neceſſary to be determin'd; or elſe ſuch lighter Matters, as the Ceremonies, Circumſtances and outward Forms of its Adminiſtration; inſtead of explaining and recommending the true Nature End and Deſign of

for *July* 1738] The ſame thing is own'd by the Emperor *Julian* in his excellent advice for a Reformation in their Philoſophy by taking in the *Chriſtian* Morals. Ep. ad *Arſac.* 49. V. *Cave* Introd. p. 32, *&c.* *Millar* Propag. p. 402. or *Gordon*'s Diſc. before his *Tacitus*. or Bp. *Leng's* B. Lect. S. 12. p. 111. Fol. add *Jenkin*, Part 3. c. 5. p. 386.

[b] See the ſeveral Periods of this Communication accurately ſettled by the Author of *Miſc. Sac.* in his Abſtract of the Scr. Hiſt. of the Apoſtles, and Pref. p. 14, *&c.*

it,

it, and being intent upon enlarging its real Kingdom, and taking care to maintain thoſe Works which are intrinſically good and profitable unto men: [a] inſtead of attending to that more excellent way which the ſame bleſſed Apoſtle ſhew'd us, * that bond of Perfection which he has ſo earneſtly exhorted us to put on above all things, † which he has taught us to eſteem above all Faith and Knowledge and even the beſt miraculous Gifts. — But though the Face of *Chriſtianity* be ſtill miſerably darken'd and deform'd; (of which more below) though ſome Nations ſeem to be in their *Childhood* yet and cannot receive it; and others grow ſo vicious and profligate as to be inclined to reject it: though in ſome Ages it ſeems to be quite hid in darkneſs and ſunk under Ignorance and Superſtition, in others born down with the Torrent of Lewdneſs and Libertiniſm: though like the Sea, it have its Ebbs and Flows,

[a] *Tit.* 3. 8, 9. 'The *great Offence* — which in all Nations and in all Ages has hindred the Propagation of the 'Goſpel of Truth, has been a hypocritical Zeal to ſecure 'by Force a fictitious Uniformity of Opinion, which is 'indeed impoſſible in nature, inſtead of the real *Chriſtian* 'Unity of Sincerity, Charity, and mutual Forbearance, 'which is the *Bond of Perfectneſs*.' Dr. *Clarke*'s Serm. 18. V. 6. 8vo Fol. V. 2. S. 18.

* 1 *Cor.* 12. 31. † *Coloſſ.* 3. 14.

and

and leave ſome Lands to gain on others; nay though ſometimes it ſeem to be at a general ſtand, and even retreating: yet nevertheleſs we have reaſon to conclude that upon the whole its motion is progreſſive, and that each very Lett tends in the main to accelerate this Progreſs; (as was obſerved in the beginning) that its Power is ſtill viſibly or inviſibly enlarging over the World, and that it will always go on to do ſo till the Kingdom of *Chriſt* be fully come, till it be *within us*, and known by all from the the leaſt to the greateſt; till the *Everlaſting Goſpel* * go forth and be ſo thoroughly underſtood and embraced as to bring on the *Fulneſs of the Gentiles*, and by their means the Reſtoration of God's own People the *Jews*, as he has often foretold:[a] and ſo *the whole Earth be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.*

From the whole we have reaſon to conclude, that the objection mentioned in the beginning of theſe Diſcourſes is abſolutely groundleſs, that

* *Rev.* 14. 6.

[a] See the Texts above, p. 183. Many more to the ſame purpoſe are collected in a Note to Part 2. c. 11. p. 187. Fol. of *Kidder*'s Demonſtr. To which may be added *Whithy*'s Appendix to his Comment on *Rom.* 11. and Treatiſe on the true *Millenium* c. 2. *Burnet*'s App. to his B. *De Stat. Mort. Werthington*'s Eſſay, p. 295.

there

there is nothing in the time and manner of the Chriſtian Diſpenſation inconſiſtent with infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs: that God is by no means partial or arbitrary in the diſtribution of his Bleſſings, but at all times takes care of all Mankind; and that this great ſcheme of Revelation was contriv'd and carried on in the beſt manner for the World in general; which ought chiefly to be regarded by us as it is in the Eye of our common Father. When we come to particular Ages and Nations, it is the ſame as with particular Perſons, the ſame Benefits are not, cannot be confer'd on all, and the Diſpenſations of Religion are perfectly analogous to thoſe of Providence in the conſtant courſe of both the natural and moral World, and theſe perhaps are capable of being ſhown to be the beſt upon the whole, as may in part appear from the former Diſcourſe.[a] If Chriſt was to come once for all, he muſt appear in ſome particular time and place which could not be equally near to all the ſucceſſive Generations of Mankind: nor could all have the ſame priviledges of ſeeing and converſing with him in the Fleſh: and as they are bleſſed who

[a] See this more at large in Bp. *Butler*'s Analogy, P^t 2. c. 6. *&c.*

have

have not ſeen and yet believed, ſo are they too moſt undoubtedly (though perhaps in a lower degree) who having not ſo much as heard of *Chriſt* are yet in a good meaſure qualified to receive his doctrine were it delivered to them.

The great Scheme of our Redemption in *Chriſt* was laid before the World began,* and if we take the account which itſelf gives of its Deſign, we ſhall find the greateſt of its Benefits extended to all Mankind, namely the Covenant for reſtoring the whole Poſterity of *Adam* to that *Immortality* which he forfeited. *The Gift of God is eternal Life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* † *Death* was *aboliſh'd* and *Life* and *Incorruptibility* [b] fix'd in the Divine Decrees from the beginning in view of *Chriſt*'s future *Ranſom*, [c] though not ſo fully *brought to light* till the actual Accompliſhment of it by him in our Nature. As to any particular Privileges that can be ſuppoſed to be annex'd to the bare belief in him, or explicit profeſſion of it, we have reaſon to think that no leſs were enjoy'd

* *Eph.* 1. 4. † *Rom.* 6. 23.

[b] Αφθαρσια. 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. *i.e.* of the Body raiſed 1 *Cor.* 15. 52.

[c] *Matt.* 20. 28. *Mark* 10. 45. *Rev.* 13. 8. *Acts* 15. 11. *Heb.* 9. 15.

by thoſe good Men of old, who by the dim Light of Prophecy or Tradition beheld his Day and rejoiced in it; who ſaw theſe Promiſes afar off and were perſwaded of them and embraced them. * Faith in him to come was the ſame in proportion to the Evidence as in him paſt, and muſt be equally meritorious. [a] Nor have we any reaſon to doubt but that the ſame Benefits, in kind at leaſt, whatever they be, might accrue from a pious Prefiguration of his Death, with a lively Faith, in *Sacrifice*, as now do from remembring it in the ſame manner in his Holy *Supper*. So far then it might be the ſame when ever he came. And when we ſpeak of the *Chriſtian* Scheme being abſolutely *neceſſary to Salvation*, † we underſtand *Salvation* in the Scripture ſenſe of that word, as implying a particular *State and Degree* of Happineſs, or as the *Chriſtian*'s *Heaven*, [b] not as the ſole Condition of enjoying everlaſting *Life*, or as neceſſary in all Men to the avoiding abſolute Miſery, or eſcaping the pains of *Hell*. He

* *Heb.* 11. 13. *Gal.* 3. 8.

[a] See Dr. *Denne*'s Serm. before the Society for the Prop. of the G. p. 53, *&c.*

† p. 25.

[b] See *Rymer*'s Repreſent. of Rev. Rel. p. 104. or *Whitby* on *Rom.* 2. 14.

has

has told us that in his Father's Houſe are many *Manſions*, States ſuited to every Degree of Holineſs and Virtue; and as it often appears that men under very different Diſpenſations here, differ but almoſt inſenſibly from each other in the abovemention'd Qualifications, can we conceive that their States of Retribution ſhall be ſo infinitely different hereafter as thoſe of *Heaven* and *Hell* are commonly believ'd to be? No doubt there are great Advantages and ſure Promiſes belonging to thoſe who have been ſo happy as to be included in the *Chriſtian* Covenant, and hold it in Faith and Purity. But let not ſuch exclude others from the Mercies of their common Lord, or murmur at the good man of the houſe if theſe alſo receive every man his *penny*,* Whether they ſhall not ſometime hereafter be call'd into the *Vineyard* and at length become acquainted with that Perſon who has done ſo great things for them as well as us;[a] or what amends may be made them for the want of thoſe ſingular Advantages which we here enjoy, is known only to that God of all Mercies in whoſe hands they are. What our

* *Matt.* 20.

[a] See *Stainoe*'s Enquiry into the State of thoſe Men in another Life who never heard of *Chriſt* in this, from *Rev.* 20.

Saviour ſaid of the *Gentiles* in contradiſtinction to the *Jews*, may be no leſs true perhaps between *Chriſtians* and the reſt of the World that never heard of *Chriſt*, but yet are prepared to enter, and in a good meaſure worthy to be admitted into his Kingdom; — who have duly attended to that *Candle of the Lord*, which is ſet up in the breaſt of every man, and which would lead ſuch to the clearer Light of his Goſpel, — *other Sheep I have which are not of this Fold; them alſo muſt I bring and they ſhall hear my Voice, and there ſhall be one Fold and one Shepherd.* [b] To them likewiſe may *the Times of refreſhing come from the preſence of the Lord.* [c] — However, the caſe of ſuch will undoubtedly be very different from that of thoſe who frequently and perverſely reject the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, reſolved to truſt to their own Strength, and *going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, and not ſubmitting themſelves unto the Righteouſneſs of God.* *

To conclude with our Bleſſed Saviour's admonition in a like caſe, † *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me:* Let us inſtead of judging others or

[b] *Joh.* 10. 16. comp. *Matt.* 8. 11. and *Luke* 13. 29.
[c] *Acts* 3. 19. comp. *Rom.* 8. 22.
* *Rom.* 10. 3. † *Joh.* 21. 22.

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determining of their State, take care to ſet a due value on and to ſecure our own Salvation: inſtead of charging God fooliſhly and ungratefully for not having imparted the ſame Benefits to All which we enjoy, let us rather be giving him continual Thanks for his *unſpeakable Gift*, and endeavouring to employ it to his Glory. Let us be intent on Studying the pure Word of God and careful to interpret it in ſuch a manner as may do moſt honour to its Author; and at all times encourage a free and an impartial Study of it. 'Tis now high time to do this, and to awake out of Sleep, ſince our Reformation is much nearer than when we firſt believed: and it is to be wiſh'd that we ourſelves could be perſwaded to examine our own State before others are obliged to do it for us; that we were diſpoſed to help and forward, rather than check the progreſs of every ſerious Enquiry, and ſtop any farther Improvements in the Knowledge of that which of all things deſerves and wants them moſt; rather than withſtand a general Reformation in Religion by rigorouſly inſiſting on and obtruding ſuch things for Doctrine as are the Commandments of Men and very foreign to the Eſſence of it; inſtead of either entertaining that Antichriſtian kind of Spirit which calls down fire from Heaven on

all who don't receive us; which delights in ſtraitening the way that leads to Life, and ſhutting up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men; or elſe incurring the Woe denounc'd againſt thoſe Hypocrites who are deſirous of lading Men with heavy Burdens, and binding upon them things which are too grievous to be born, and which they know that none need touch with one of their fingers. *

As we ſee the Faults and Follies of paſt Ages, a double Woe will be to us if inſtead of taking warning by them and avoiding the like, we are reſolv'd to tread the ſame Steps, and fill up the Meaſure of our Fathers.

Let us who have leiſure given us for this very purpoſe think on theſe things, and ſtudy to diſcern *the Signs of the Times*, that we may be prepared for them and profit by them: that we may not only ſave ourſelves in the day of Trouble, but alſo contribute to the ſafety of our *Jeruſalem*, and be ready to watch over and defend it whenever, or from what quarter ſoever the Enemy cometh. As we are a City upon a Hill, let us ſhew forth the Praiſes of him that has called us out of Darkneſs into his marvellous Light; let our Light ſhine before Men, and let us freely communicate it to them

* *Matt.* 23. *Luke* 11.

who

who ſtill ſit in Darkneſs, and ſtrive to adorn the Doctrine of our Lord. As we live in a more enlighten'd Age and are intruſted with a greater ſhare of Talents, let us walk worthy of it and endeavour to excell others as much in our improvements. Above all things, let us labour to bring forth the genuine Fruits of our Religion in true Holineſs and Virtue, and daily draw nigh unto God in the imitation of his *Moral Perfections*, which is the Sum and Subſtance, the End and Aim of all *Religion*.

III.

The Progreſs of *Natural Religion* and *Science*,

OR,

The continual Improvement of the World in general.

Antiquitas Seculi, Juventus Mundi.
BACON de Augment. Scient. L. 1. c. 5.

Antiquity *I unfeignedly honour and reverence, but why I ſhould be bound to reverence the Ruſt and Refuſe, the Droſs and Dregs, the Warts and Wens thereof, I am yet to ſeek. — As in the little, ſo in the great World, reaſon will tell you that Old Age or Antiquity is to be accounted by the farther diſtance from the Beginning, and the nearer approach to the End: and as grey Beards are for Wiſdom and Judgement to be preferred before young green Heads, becauſe they have more Experience in Affairs: ſo likewiſe for the ſame Cauſe the preſent Times are to be preferred before the Infancy or Youth of the World, having the Hiſtory and Practiſe of former Ages to inform us, which they wanted — In diſgracing the preſent Times therefore you diſgrace Antiquity properly ſo call'd.* HAKEWILL. Apol. p. 132.

ECCLES. vii. 10.

Say not thou what is the Cauſe why the former Days were better than theſe? for thou doſt not enquire wiſely concerning this.

THE badneſs of the Times has been a common Topic of Complaint in every *Age*, and that they are growing worſe and worſe continually is what ſome Perſons think themſelves obliged to inſiſt upon with no leſs frequency and vehemence, how hard ſoever they find it to account for this in any reſpect. The former of theſe arguments if urg'd only to expoſe and give a check to ſome particular predominant Vices (for which indeed all Ages have afforded too much room) may be of conſtant uſe and often neceſſary. But when the latter is added to it, and both carried ſo far as to make us diſcontented and uneaſy with ourſelves and troubleſome to one another; to ſet us a quarrelling with the Station and Society in which we are placed, a murmuring at and ſpeaking evil of the Government we live under; deſpiſing every human Dominion and even repining at the

of

Conduct of Divine Providence, and miſtaking the Iſſue of its Diſpenſations to ſuch a degree as muſt confound our judgement and unhinge our Faith in the unlimited Goodneſs, Power and Wiſdom of their Author; then 'tis high time to correct an Error of this kind, and enquire into the true ſtate and Hiſtory of the World in the abovemention'd particular.

In order to which, ſo far as the compaſs of ſuch a Diſcourſe will allow, I purpoſe in the firſt place.

I. To ſhew the Falſity of this Complaint in ſeveral reſpects.

II. Secondly, to point out ſome of its ill Conſequences, which may be ſufficient to juſtify the Preacher's obſervation in the Text, *viz.* that this way of judging is no very *wiſe* one.

The Deſign of the Book from which theſe words are taken is to examine into the Courſe of this World in general, to conſider the Nature of its Enjoyments and the Ends propoſed in our purſuit of them. No one ſaw farther into theſe things or better underſtood their real value; none perhaps had a mind more elevated and refined above them, or could in a more lively manner diſplay the Vanity and Emptineſs thereof on ſome occaſions than King *Solomon*; yet where he meets with thoſe who

treat

treat the Subject ſo very injudiciouſly as both to diſparage the Works of God by repreſenting them to be ever going backward and on the decline, and to diſtract the Minds of Men by teaching them to undervalue and grow weary of the preſent Benefits through an invidious retroſpect to former Days: — when things are placed in ſuch a light as this, we find him abſolutely diſapproving of the view and all thoſe Queſtions which ariſe from thence, intimating that the very Foundation of them is not true in fact. To make this appear more fully let us conſider ſome of the Advantages of Life both *natural* and *acquired*, in order to ſee whether there be any ſigns that theſe are now diſpens'd in a leſs liberal way than formerly, or whether the reverſe is not more probable.

As to the Fruitfulneſs of the Earth and Clemency of Seaſons, the Temperature of the Air and Influence of Heavenly Bodies, the vulgar miſtake of their Decay and tendency to Diſſolution has I think long ſince been exploded.[a]

Whatever might have been the employment of Man had he continued innocent, (which yet we ſee was not exempted from the Care of

[a] A ſufficient Confutation of it may be ſeen in *Hakewill*'s Apology, paſſim.

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dressing and *keeping* that spot of Ground in which *Adam* was placed *) upon his Fall a State of Toil and Labour became necessary in order to secure the Virtue Health and Quiet of the Species in any tolerable degree : [b] on which account the Earth is represented as lying under an extraordinary *Curse* of Barrenness, which has been generally thought to have continued and receiv'd considerable addition at the *Deluge*; and very philosophical Reasons were assign'd for this Opinion, [c] till of late a learned Prelate [d] shew'd us from the Circumstances of the History, that the direct contrary was fact. For some time after, the Longevity of Mankind was very necessary for peopling the World and learning Arts, [e] though I should think it difficult to point out the Natural Causes of this Longevity and the following Change, at least such as can be consistent with the fore-

* *Gen.* 2. 15.

[b] See *King*'s Origin of Evil, p. 192. Note 33. 3 Edit. and the Authors there referr'd to. To which add *Worthington*'s Essay on *Man's Redemption*, who has treated this point more particularly, p. 64, *&c.*

[c] See them collected in the *Universal Hist.* Vol. 1. p. 106, *&c.*

[d] Bp. *Sherlock*, Use and Intent of Proph. Disc. 4. comp. Mr. *Worthington* on the same Subject, Ess. p. 84, *&c.*

[e] See *Hakewill*, p. 42. *Joseph.* L. 1. c. 3.

men-

mention'd opinion.[f] Since if the Earth was corrupted to ſuch a degree at the univerſal Deluge, and the Period of Human Life thereby ſo much ſhortned, this effect one would imagine ſhould have been moſt evident while theſe ſame Cauſes muſt be freſh and operate moſt ſtrongly: not to repeat that this ſuppoſed Corruption is a vulgar Error. This great Change therefore ſeems to have been owing to a poſitive Appointment of the Deity diſtinct from, and ſubſequent to that of *Noah*'s Flood, and introduced for Reaſons which took place ſome Ages after it, and may be conceiv'd as a *New Diſpenſation* neceſſary for the future Government of the World in every age.[g] However, ſo early as *Moſes*'s days * we find the Life of Man fix'd to the ſame length in general that it has at preſent, (for his Deſcription of it ſeems not capable of being wholly reſtrain'd to the

[f] V. *Cleric* in *Gen.* 5. 27. et *Buddei* Hiſt. Eccl. Vol. 1. p. 151. Mr. *Worthington* ſuppoſes a Decay in the Conſtitution of *Noah*'s Sons immediately occaſion'd by the Rains and Waters of the Deluge, Eſſ. p. 74, &c.

[g] 'After the Flood, God made a ſudden alteration in 'the Length of Men's Days: for perceiving the general 'Iniquity to encreaſe again, and thereupon deſigning to 'make an alteration in the World's continuance, he 'haſten'd the Period of Human Life, that the number 'of

* *Pſ.* 90. 10.

particular Caſe at that time in the Wilderneſs) and ever ſince ſo far as the Accounts of ancient Times can be rely'd on we have reaſon to believe that the Conſtitution of Mankind in general, as well as the State of the Earth and Heavens, whereon that muſt depend, have at all times been much the ſame as we now find them,[h] and may reſt ſatisfied that the original Promiſe has been, and will amply be made good, that *while the Earth remaineth, Seed-time*

' of Souls he intended to ſend into the World, before the ' final Conſummation of all things, might have a ſpeedier ' Probation.' [*Stackhouſe* B. of Div. p. 309. 1ſt Edit.] ' and that Death being brought nearer to their view might ' draw off their attachment from this World, and induce ' them to place it upon another, which at the diſtance of ſo ' many hundreds of years it had little power to effect.' *Worthington* Eſſ. p. 73. ' Sin brought Death in firſt, and ' yet Man lived almoſt a thouſand years. But he ſinned ' more, and then Death came nearer to him: for when all ' the World was firſt drowned in Wickedneſs and then in ' Water, God cut him ſhorter by one half, and five hun- ' dred years was his ordinary Period. And Man ſinned ſtill, ' and had ſtrange Imaginations, and built Towers in the ' Air; and then about *Peleg*'s Time God cut him ſhorter ' by one half yet, too hundred and odd years was his de- ' termination. And yet the Generations of the World re- ' turned not unanimouſly to God; and God cut him off ' another half yet, and reduced him to a hundred and ' twenty years. And by *Moſes*'s Time one half of the final ' remanent Portion was pared away, reducing him to three- ' ſcore

and Harveſt and Cold and Heat and Summer and Winter and Day and Night ſhall not ceaſe,* and therefore may conclude that the Diſtribution and Enjoyment of what I call the *Natural Advantages* of Life is ſo far from a conſtant gradual Decline, that theſe have been at all times in themſelves pretty equal, and rather improving as they receive aſſiſtance, which they do very much, from the *acquired* ones, which we are in the next place to conſider.

[g] ſcore years and ten.—But if God had gone on ſtill in the ſame method and ſhorten'd our Days as we multiplied our Sins, we ſhould have been but as an *Ephemeron*; Man ſhould have lived the Life of a Flie or a Gourd. — But God ſeeing *Man's Thoughts were only evil continually*, he was reſolved *no longer ſo to ſtrive with him*, nor deſtroy the *Kind*, but puniſh *Individuals* only and ſingle Perſons; and if they ſinned, or if they did obey, regularly their Life ſhould be proportionable.' *Taylor*, Life of *Chriſt*, p. 305.

[h] See Sir *T. P. Blount.* Eſſ. 4. p. 188. 192, *&c.* or Lord *Bacon*'s Hiſt. of Life and Death. That the *Stature* of Man in this Age is the ſame as it was near three thouſand years ago appears from *Greaves*'s account of the Monument in the *Egyptian* Pyramid. *Derham.* Phyſ. Theol. B. 5. c. 4. N. 4. That we have had ſeveral very late inſtances of Perſons whoſe Longevity exceeded that of the *Patriarchal* Age may be ſeen in *Worthington's* Eſſay, p. 417. comp. *Huet.* Alnetan. Quæſt. L. 2. c. 12. S. 4.

* *Gen.* 8. 22.

The late Invention of *Arts* and *Sciences* is uſually inſiſted on, and very juſtly, in our Diſputes with *Atheiſts* againſt the *Eternity* of the World; and their continual *Progreſs*, though perhaps ſeldom attended to, ſeems to be a Point no leſs neceſſary to complete the Argument. For if it can be ſhewn either that theſe which we now have, or others of equal uſe and importance were diſcover'd ſooner and dropt again, and ſubject to their ſeveral Revolutions, why ſhould not we grant from *Analogy* that the World itſelf has undergone the like? that the ſame *Time and Chance* has happen'd to all things concerning it and its Inhabitants? But that there actually have been ſuch Viciſſitudes in Nature, or ſo much as one valuable Art, or uſeful branch of Science wholly loſt ſince the Creation I know no ground ſufficient to believe.[a] In a Hiſtory of the World which

[a] For proof of this ſee the pretended Inſtances of loſt Arts in *Pancirollus*, which upon examination will appear all to be either manifeſtly falſe or frivolous, or of ſuch trifles as have been dropt by diſuſe: to which may be added *Wotton*'s Pref. to Reflect. on Ancient and Modern Learning. 'I will agree—that ſeveral Arts in the World 'have been loſt, and others after a time again revived; 'but then theſe have been ſuch Arts as have been more 'curious than uſeful, and have rather been ornamental 'than beneficial to Mankind: and there has been ſome 'good

has been prov'd by a late unexceptionable Writer [b] to be of all others by far the moſt ancient and authentic, and which carries its Accounts as high as either could be wiſh'd or hoped for from Hiſtory, even to the forming and firſt peopling the World itſelf, and the original Diviſion of the Nations; in this we have the Birth and Genealogy, the Names and Characters of the Founders of States and King-

' good reaſon to be given of their diſuſe, either by their ' growing out of faſhion, or by ſome more eaſy and com- ' modious Invention. Thus the Art of *Glaſs-painting* was ' loſt about the time of the Reformation * when the ' Images of Saints were not ſo highly eſteem'd, and ' Churches began to be more gravely adorned. Thus the ' uſe of *Archers* in an Army has been laid aſide ſince the ' Invention of Pikes and Guns. But who can imagine ' that the Art of the Smith and the Carpenter ſhould ' ever be forgot after the firſt Invention; unleſs we could ' ſuppoſe that Houſes and all ſorts of Utenſils and Con- ' veniences ſhould grow out of faſhion, and it would be ' the Mode for Men to live like Colts and Wild Aſſes? ' Unleſs Men could be ſuppoſed to forget the uſe of eating ' and drinking, I am confident they could never forget ' the Art of Ploughing and Sowing and Preſſing the ' Grape.' *Nicholl*'s Conf. Part. 1. p. 86. 1ſt Ed. See more of this in *Wotton*'s Pref. p. 14, *&c.* 2d Edit.

[b] Sir *J. Newton.* Chronol. of Ancient Kingdoms.

* This ſeems to be a vulgar Error. See *Glaſs painting* in *Chambers's Cyclopedia.* or *Spectacle de la Nature*, V. 3. p. 219. of *Cement.* ib. p. 228. add *Motte*'s Abr. of Phil. Tranſ. V. 2. Part 4. p 62, 63.

doms, as well as the Inventors even of manual Arts deliver'd down, [a] and from the very air of Truth and that Simplicity which runs through the whole relation, have much more reaſon to depend upon it than on the fabulous Antiquities of *Greece* and *Egypt*, as the ſame excellent Author has demonſtrated. From whom we learn that neither the planting of the World, nor the Introduction of Arts and Sciences

[a] *Cain builded a City*, or the firſt City. *Gen.* 4. 17. add *Gen.* 10. 8, 9, *&c. Jabal was the Father of ſuch as dwell in Tents and ſuch as have Cattle, and his Brother's name was Jubal, he was the Father of all ſuch as handle the Harp and the Organ, and Tubal Cain was an Inſtructor of every Artificer in Braſs and Iron*; or a Forger of *Arms*. *Gen.* 4. 20, *&c.* After the *Flood* we are told that *Noah began to be an Huſbandman and he planted a Vineyard*; Gen. 9. 20. which by his being ſurpriſed in ſuch a manner with the Effects of its Fruit ſeems to have been the firſt of the kind. So late as *Abraham*'s time we find there was enough of the beſt Land unoccupied for both him and *Lot* to chuſe out of *Gen.* 13. 9. which (as the Author of *Bibliotheca Biblica* obſerves, p. 335.) is a moſt illuſtrious Teſtimony for the late peopling of the World and by conſequence for the Truth of the *Moſaic* Hiſtory of the Creation and Deluge, in as much as it appears by this that the moſt pleaſant and moſt fruitful Country of the whole Earth and which in a few hundreds of years afterward was ſo exceeding populous, was yet in the days of *Abraham* ſo very thinly peopled that even large Tracts of Ground were left in a manner uncultivated and without Proprietor.

were

were of ſo early a Date as they have uſually been repreſented. [b] Moſt Nations, like private Families, have at all times been unaccountably fond of carrying up their Pedigree as high as poſſible, and where no marks remain'd of the ſucceſſive Alterations in their State, were apt to imagine that it had always been the ſame. Hence the many fooliſh Pretences among the Ancients to their being *Aborigines* of the

[b] 'Though *Noah* and his Sons had doubtleſs ſome 'knowledge of the Inventions of the Antediluvians and 'probably acquainted their Deſcendants with ſuch of 'them as were moſt obvious and uſeful in common Life, 'yet it is not to be imagined that any of the more curi-'ous Arts or ſpeculative Sciences were improved in any 'degree, ſuppoſing them to have been known or invented, 'till ſome conſiderable time after the Diſperſion.—For on 'their ſettling in any Country, they found it imployment 'ſufficient to cultivate the Land (which yet for want of 'ſeparate Property and ſecurity in their Poſſeſſions in 'thoſe early times, they improved no farther than barely 'to ſupply their Neceſſities) and to provide themſelves 'Habitations and Neceſſaries for their mutual comfort 'and ſubſiſtence. * Beſides this they were often obliged 'to remove from one place to another, where they could 'more conveniently reſide; and it was a great while be-'fore they came to embody themſelves together in Towns 'and Cities, and from thence to ſpread into Provinces 'and to ſettle the bounds and extent of their Territories.† 'Two or three Ages at leaſt muſt have been ſpent in

* Vid. *Thucid.* L. 1. ſub. in.

† *Stillingfleet.* Or. S. B, 1. c. 1. S. 16.

Countries they had inhabited time out of mind: hence were they led to make their ſeveral *Gods* the Founders of their Government.[c] They knew but very little of the World, and the Tradition which they had of that little was ſo far blended with fiction and Romance that it ſerv'd only to confound them.[d] Upon the removal of this Cloud by the more faithful, diligent and accurate Enquiry of the Moderns, we ſee Hiſtory beginning to clear up even at this diſtance; the World puts on a very different face, and all parts of it appear conformable to the late well known courſe of things. We find the *Marvellous* in all their Annals, and more eſpecially in the great point of their Antiquity, exceedingly reduced, and our own plain accounts ſtill more and more confirmed: from which we may be convinc'd that both the peopling and cultivating of the Earth aroſe at firſt from a few low beginnings, and very gradually ſpread itſelf; and that it has at all

[c] this manner; and it is not very likely they ſhould 'amuſe themſelves with celeſtial Obſervations in parti-'cular, when they had ſo many more preſſing affairs to 'mind.' *Univerſ. Hiſt.* B. 1. c. 2. p. 173.

[d] Datur hæc venia Antiquitati ut miſcendo humana Divinis Primordia Urbium auguſtiora faciat. *Liv.* Pref. Hiſt. L. 1.

times

times proceeded by pretty near the ſame ſlow regular ſteps it does at preſent. Since we have look'd into paſt times more narrowly we prove the Ancients far from being ſo expert and knowing as by a ſuperſtitious reverence for every thing remote we once were accuſtom'd to ſuppoſe: And as well from the preſent State of thoſe particular Nations which uſed to brag moſt of their extraordinary advancement and long poſſeſſion of the Sciences, as from the Remains of their Forefathers Skill, when fairly repreſented, we find no great reaſon to envy them their beſt Acquirements; ſo far I mean as concerns real Uſe; for all the worth that Faſhion and Fancy may give things is out of the queſtion. * Some of them indeed deſcribe their Knowledge in high ſtrains, and perhaps for their times and in compariſon with ſome of their Neighbours, it may have been conſiderable; and yet 'tis more than probable that ſuch accounts are chiefly owing to their Ignorance

[d] The Grounds of the Uncertainty of Ancient Hiſtory, may be ſeen in *Stillingfleet*, Or. Sac. B. 1. c. 1. S. 16, 18, &c. Of the *Egyptian* in particular, ſee *Shaw*'s Travels p. 442. comp. *Baker* on Hiſt. and Chronol. Reflections, c. 10, and 11. and *Shuckford*, V. 2. B. 8.

* Why the Sciences of Men's Brains have been more ſubject to Viciſſitudes than than the Arts of their Hands, ſee *Sprat's* Hiſt. *R. S.* p. 118, &c. 3 Edit.

of the true State of the reſt of Mankind; as is the caſe remarkably with the *Chineſe*, a People ſo much celebrated by themſelves and others, who yet upon more ſtrict examination have appear'd in moſt things of conſequence, and where moſt might have been expected, leaſt to deſerve a Character: So that nothing but their as ſmall acquaintance with the *Europeans* formerly, as ours with them, could poſſibly give riſe to thoſe extravagant Sentiments and Sayings that are recorded of each other. [c] The ſame may in a great meaſure be affirm'd of the

[c] See the 1ſt Part p. 18. to which may be added *Jenkin*, V. 1. p. 340, *&c.* *Wotton*'s and *Baker*'s Reflections, under the Heads *Phyſic* and *Aſtronomy*. Theſe and many other Authors ſhew us how little able they were to make any proper Obſervations in their ſo much boaſted Science of the Heavens, till ſhewn the way of late by Miſſionaries: as alſo how monſtrouſly inaccurate were both their Chronological and Aſtronomical Tables. *Pere Du Halde*, their Panegyriſt, ſays, they have applied themſelves from the beginning of their Empire to *Aſtronomy*; yet when he comes to explain himſelf, all their Study appears to be a little, low, judicial *Aſtrology*, V. 1. Fol. *Eng.* p. 394. So ignorant were they in *Geography* that their Literati ſeeing a Map of the World in the hands of the *Jeſuits* took that one of the two Hemiſperes, which contain'd *Europe*, *Aſia* and *Africa*, for the Empire of *China*, p. 280. Some of their curious Notions in Religion may be ſeen, p. 254. 652. 655. 657. Their ſkill in *Metaphyſics* has been touch'd upon by Mr. *Gurdon*, B. Lect. S. 14. p. 425, *&c.*

Egyp-

Egyptian Learning.[f] Though this Country has been ſtiled the Mother of Arts[g] as well as Miſtreſs of Religion:[h] and was no doubt as early poliſhed as moſt, yet if we be allow'd to judge of her improvement in other parts of Science from that moſt concerning one, and that which therefore in all reaſon ſhould have been moſt cultivated, I mean *Medicine*, of which ſhe alſo claims the firſt Invention,[i] we ſhall not have much room to marvel at her high

Their *Mechanics* may be judg'd of from the *Jeſuit*'s account of their taking the firſt Watch he brought thither for a living Creature. *Boyle* on Final Cauſes, p. 230. Their Method of communicating any Science, from their yet being without any *Alphabet*; as is obſerv'd by the ingenious Author of the *Divine Legation*, V. 2. p. 79.

[f] 'The truth is, there want not grounds of ſuſpicion 'that the old *Egyptian* Learning was not of that elevation 'which the preſent diſtance of our Age makes us apt to 'think it was: and a learned Man hath in a ſet Diſcourſe 'endeavoured to ſhew the great Defects that there were 'in it.* Neither can it I think be deny'd but according 'to the reports we have now concerning it, ſome parts 'of their Learning were frivolous, a great deal magical, 'and the reſt ſhort of that improvement which the ac-'ceſſion of the parts and induſtry of after Ages gave unto 'it.' *Stillingfleet.* Or. S. B. 2. c. 2. p. 81. add *Wotton*'s Reflections, c. 9. and Sir *T. P. Blount*'s Eſſ. 4. p. 153, *&c.*

[g] *Macrob.* Sat. L. 1. 15.

[h] Id. L. 7. c. 13. et Ammian. Marc. L. 22.

[i] *Plin.* N. H. L. 7. c. 56.

ad-

* *Conring.* de Hem. Med. c. 19, 11, 12.

advances. — 'It muſt evidently appear, ſays a 'very learned Writer, that the *Egyptians* could 'have no ſuch Phyſicians in the days of *Moſes* 'as *Diodorus* and *Herodotus* ſeem to ſuppoſe: 'it is much more probable that Ages after theſe 'times they were, like the *Babylonians*, entirely 'deſtitute of perſons ſkilful in curing any Diſ-'eaſes that might happen amongſt them, and 'that the beſt method they could think of, 'after conſulting their Oracles, was when any 'one was ſick, they took care to have as many 'Perſons ſee and ſpeak to him as poſſibly could, 'that if any one who ſaw the ſick Perſon, had 'had the like Diſtemper, he might ſay what 'was proper to be done in that Condition.' [k]

[k] *Shuckford.* Connect. B. 9. p. 367. *Babylonii* (teſte *Herodot.* L. 1. et *Strab.* G. L. 16.) languentes in forum efferebant, ut viri qui eos adirent conſulerent hortarenturque ad ea quæ ipſi faciendo effugiſſent ſimilem morbum, aut alium noviſſent effugiſſe. — Idem factitabant *Luſitani* et *Egyptii. P. Virg.* de Inv. Rer. L. 1. c. 20. Conf. *Strab.* G. L. 3. et *Plutarch.* de Occult. Vivend. That the ſame was done in other Countries. ſee *Harle*'s Hiſt. Eſſay on the State of Phyſ. in the *O. T.* p. 4. 'The *Egyptian* Prac-'tiſe of Phyſic depended much on Aſtrological and 'Magical Grounds, either the Influence of ſome parti-'cular Planet, or ſome Tutelar Dæmon were ſtill con-'ſider'd [*Wotton*, p. 119.] which precarious foundation 'muſt needs depreciate their Skill, and ſtop any increaſe 'of Knowledge which might be made on other Principles.' *Univerſ.*

From which ſingle inſtance of the State of this moſt neceſſary Art in thoſe Times and Places, as well as its firſt Rudiments in like manner deſcribed by an able Judge,[1] we may I think be pretty well ſatisfied in what Condition the reſt then were in other parts of the World, as alſo of their gradual Improvement ſince in all reſpects.[m] Many are indeed carried on much faſter in ſome Countries than in others, and ſome now and then are ſoon brought to ſo great Perfection in one Country as to ſeem almoſt incapable of any increaſe for ſeveral Ages; which proves againſt an exact equable Improvement under each Period and in each particular, which never was contended for; but is no Ar-

Univerſ. Hiſt. V. 1. p. 219. nor was the Method which they are ſaid to have taken of eſtabliſhing its Rules by Law [*Diod. Sic.* L. 1. 74. *Shuckford*, B. 9. p. 362. *Chandler*, Vind. of O. T. part 2. p. 442.] like to make any great progreſs in the Science. A tolerable account of the Ancient State of Phyſic may be ſeen in a Note to p. 85. of Dr. *Young*'s Hiſt. Diſſ. V. 2. Add *Harle*'s Eſſ. p. 80, *&c.* or *Barchuſen* de Medicinæ Orig. & Progreſſ. Diſſert. 1. & 18.

1 *Celſus* Inventionem Artis ſcienter ponit L. 1. ſcribens. "Sæpe cauſa apparet utpote Lippitudinis, Vulneris, ne- "que ex his patet Medicina: quod ſi ſcientiam non ſub- "jicit evidens cauſa, multo minus ea poteſt ſubjicere "quæ in dubio eſt. Cum igitur illa incerta incompre- "henſibiliſque ſit, a certis potius & exploratis petendum "eſt

gument againſt Improvement in general, much leſs any Evidence that theſe grow daily worſe; and notwithſtanding this or other Limitations which might be admitted, yet from ſome of the great out-lines (as we may ſay) of Nature, from plain Appearances in many remarkable Æras, and moſt conſiderable Events, we ſeem to have ſtill ground ſufficient to conclude that on the whole, they are and always have been in the main *progreſſive*.

Now this Progreſs in *Arts* will neceſſarily bring with it a proportionable Improvement of all the other Natural Advantages; as Health, Strength, Plenty and Politeneſs: each of them

" eſt præſidium, id eſt ab his quae in ipſis curationibus " *Experientia* docuit, ſicut in cæteris omnibus artibus. " Nam ne agricolam quidem aut gubernatorem diſputa- " tione, ſed *uſu* fieri liquet. Aſt iſtæ cogitationes nihil " ad medicinam pertinent, cum de his rebus qui diverſa " ſenſerunt non ab obſcuris cauſis, neque a naturalibus " actionibus, ſed ab *Experimentis*, prout cuique reſpon- " derant in perducendo homines in eandem ſanitatem, " medendi vias traxerint. Notarunt enim ægrorum qui " ſine medicis erant, alios propter aviditatem primis die- " bus cibum protinus ſumpſiſſe, alios propter faſtidium " abſtinuiſſe, & levatum magis morbum eorum qui ab- " ſtinuiſſent: itemque alios in ipſa Febre aliquid ediſſe, " alios paulo ante eam, alios poſt remiſſionem ejus, & " optime iis ceſſiſſe qui poſt finem Febris id feciſſent. " Eadem ratione alios inter principia ſtatim uſos eſſe cibo

" ple-

tend in ſome reſpect or other to improve and adorn the Face of Nature, and lead us to apply its Laws to our reſpective Uſes much more effectually than could be obtain'd without them. By them we are enabled to reap its ſeveral Benefits in ways more eaſy and compendious, with leſs time, labour and expence; the World is ſtock'd more plentifully with Inhabitants, and each of them ſupported in a way more elegant and advantageous to itſelf and all around it. In ſhort, every thing in Life becomes more comfortable and commodious, and Life itſelf may be ſaid to attain a longer Date by means of both a better and more early Education. [11]

" pleniore, alios exiguo, & graviores eos factos qui ſe " impleviſſent. Hæc ſimiliaque cum quotidie incideren, " diligentes homines talia animadvertentes ad extremum " perceperunt quæ ægrotantibus utilia forent. Sic Medi- " cinam ortam inter omnes conſtat." *C. Celſ.* ap. *Pol. Virg.* de *R. I.* L. 1. c. 20. Add *Wotton.* Refl. c. 26. p. 341. *&c.* 2d. Ed. *Max. Tyr.* Diſſ. 40. 234. *Barchuſen.* Diſſert. 1. 3. p. 11. *&c.*

[m] See *Nicholls*'s Conf. Part 1. p. 81, 82. 1ſt Ed.

[11] ' There is a ſenſe in which theſe latter Generations ' in general have the advantage of the Ancients, and in ' which they may be ſaid to out-live them — *viz.* in that ' they live more in leſs time. It is a common Obſerva- ' tion that Children ripen and become Men ſooner in ' theſe latter Ages than formerly they did. — Notwith- ' ſtanding our prejudices in other reſpects, we eſteem ſo

' well

That this has been the caſe in later Ages ſeems too clear to be deny'd by any, who will be at the leaſt trouble to compare them with the moſt extravagant account of former ones. [mm] 'Tis no great Compliment to the preſent times to ſay we are improved in every manual Art, as well as thoſe of Government, [n] the ſocial ones, and even our very Amuſements; [nn] the thing ſhews itſelf every where; and 'tis no leſs

ᶜ well of ourſelves in this, that we think we are more ᶜ knowing in every Science and Profeſſion of Life, and ᶜ more capable of Buſineſs than our Anceſtors, not far ᶜ backwards were at double our Age. And in confirma- ᶜ tion hereof ſome traces in Scripture may be obſerved, ᶜ whereby it appears that the State of Childhood continued ᶜ much longer in the Infancy of the World than at pre- ᶜ ſent, and ſeem'd to bear proportion to the greater length ᶜ of Men's Lives. And the ſame is obſerved by Heathen ᶜ Authors.' *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 422, 423.

[mm] — ᶜ When Men began to unite into Societies, to ᶜ cloath themſelves, and build Cottages, and apply them- ᶜ ſelves to Agriculture, the Perſons who fell upon the ᶜ firſt hints of theſe rude Contrivances, were eſteem'd ᶜ ſuch mighty Benefactors to Mankind that they could ᶜ never ſufficiently expreſs their Gratitude to them. Hence ᶜ they were made immortal, and Divine Honours were ᶜ paid to them; and hence it is well known, aroſe the ᶜ Godſhip of *Jupiter*, *Bacchus*, *Minerva*, *Ceres*, and the ᶜ reſt of that Tribe of Deities: But there is not a *Plough-* ᶜ *boy* now, that would not have been a God, even to *Ju-* ᶜ *piter* himſelf; had he lived in his Days, with his pre- ᶜ ſent Skill in Huſbandry. " Had the Myſtery of Printing

" been

plain *a priori* that it must be so. If, as the *Psalmist* says, * *One Day telleth another, and one Night certifieth another:* if according to the Prophet, † *many run to and fro*, (travel by Sea and Land) and thereby *Knowledge* is *increased*; if by repeated Observation and Experience, the World grow (as it does unavoidably) in any respect more perfect, this will, by that affinity and union long since observ'd between

" been invented in ancient Times, *Guttenberg* of *Mentz* " might have been a God of higher esteem throughout " *Germany*, than *Mercury* or *Jupiter* himself." [*Worthington*'s Essay, p. 169.] which we cannot think improbable, since his assistant *Fust* or *Faust* attain'd the Title of *Conjurer* for it in so late times and such a Place as *Paris*.

[n] The Modern Governments are better calculated for the general good of the governed, which is now known to be the only end of Government, than the Ancient ones were. That horrid Spirit of Heroism and Desire of Conquest seems to be pretty well extinguish'd: and 'if at 'present there are fewer Revolutions in Christendom, 'tis becaufe the Principles of found Morality are more 'universally known; Men are less savage and fierce, and 'their Understanding is better cultivated; and perhaps 'all this is owing to Men of Learning, who have polish-'ed *Europe*.' Exam. of *Machiavel*'s Prince, p. 18, 19. Add Mr. *Worthington*'s judicious Observations on this Subject. *Essay*, c. 8. p. 173, *&c.*

[nn] See *Worthington. Ess.* p. 201.

* *Psal.* 19. 2. † *Dan.* 12. 4.

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the parts of Science [o] derive Perfection on each Siſter Art. The ſame effect will in a good meaſure follow if the World be but ſuppoſed to continue in the ſame natural State in which it was created, and the Genius of Mankind keep where it was originally; nay this muſt be the caſe if both do not grow worſe, and in a very great degree, much greater than has ever been pretended. But as this point can be no longer call'd in queſtion than till the matter is duly ſtated, we have not ſo much occaſion to give a direct Proof of it by deſcending to Particulars, (which indeed would be infinite, and moſt of which appear too obvious to need naming [p],) as to point out what is more material and perhaps leſs taken notice of, the farther connection which this *Progreſs of Arts* has with our *Religious Knowledge* of each kind.

By Religion in general, I mean the way of promoting our moſt perfect Happineſs upon the whole, in this Life, as well as qualifying

[o] Omnes Artes quae ad Humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, & quaſi cognatione quadam inter ſe continentur. *Cic.* pro *Arch. P.* Id. de *Or.* L. 3. Eſt illa *Platonis* vera — vox omnem Doctrinam harum ingenuarum & humanarum artium uno quodam ſocietatis vinculo contineri. Ubi enim perfecta vis eſt Rationis ejus qua cauſæ rerum atque exitus cognoſcuntur, mirus quidam omnium quaſi conſenſus Doctrinarum concentuſque

us for and by particularly recommending ourſelves to the Divine Favour entitling us to higher Degrees of it in the next. Now the knowledge of this, whether natural or reveled, will appear to have held pace in general with all other Knowledge from the beginning, and theſe three Branches of Science ſeem to have been in the main ſimilar and ſynchronous, as indeed they ought to be, or elſe perpetual Diſappointment, Miſery and Confuſion would enſue, as was obſerv'd in part before. * The firſt Race of Men had as much Knowledge imparted to them, moſt probably by God himſelf, as they could either then want, or well be cacapable of; as much as they had either means or leiſure to employ; and higher notices, could they have been attended to, would we conceive rather have diſtracted and render'd them uneaſy in their then ſituation, and tended to diſqualify them for their more immediate Occupations in that part of Life. They were placed in a World

centuſque reperitur. It would be mere impertinence to bring Inſtances in proof of this.

p The Reader may ſee a Liſt of them in *Pancirollus* de Nov. Repert. as alſo in *Edwards*, *Glanvill*, *Wotton*, Sir T. P. *Blount*, *Perault*, *Sprat*'s *Hiſt. R. S.* and others, who have appear'd for the *Moderns*, as I think with great advantage, in the late Controverſy on this Subject.

* Part. I. p. 7, 8, 9.

capable of affording all Gratifications ſuited to their mortal frame, and made for its ſupport, and were deſign'd to glorify their Maker's Goodneſs in the Enjoyment of them for ſome time here, as well as to expect a reparation of its Decays, with farther and more full Manifeſtations of the ſame Goodneſs ſomewhere hereafter. Their firſt Employ then was to learn the preſent uſe and application of theſe natural Benefits themſelves, as well as to lay a foundation for communicating and extending them to future Generations, which were to inhabit the ſame place for many Ages. And accordingly their Notions of the World and of its Governour and conſequent Opinions in Religion both natural and poſitive were ſuch as might be expected from Men in ſuch circumſtances.* As to the latter, and more eſpecially that great Article of it which concern'd the Reſtauration of Human Nature, they had only a general, indeterminate expectation of ſome Redeemer or other, who was ſometime to ariſe among them: [a] which yet was very ſufficient to keep up their Hopes and ſecure a Truſt and Dependence on

* What theſe Opinions might be is largely and beautifully deſcribed by Dr. *Winder*. Hiſt. of Knowledge, V. 1. c. 2. S. 2. though whether our firſt Parents *thought ſo clearly on the Subject*, as this ingenious Author and *thoſe celebrated Moderns* he there mentions [p. 36] I much queſtion.

their

their Creator, eſpecially when revived by ſo many earneſts of preſent temporal Bleſſings: but when or where, or upon what plan that Redemption was to be work'd they knew not; and perhaps it might be as unneceſſary to impart this fully to them as it was probably above their comprehenſion. To preſerve an intercourſe with the Divine Being it is likewiſe probable that they had poſitive Directions about conſecrating to him a part of their Goods, together with the Times and Places for preſenting this before him, by way of acknowledgement of his preſent Bounty, and application for the continuance of it, and alſo in deprecation of his Diſpleaſure whenever they became ſenſible of having incurr'd it by abuſing them; and laſtly as a ſettled ſtated means of always having acceſs to him, and finding acceptance with him. Hence was the Origin of *Sacrifices*,[b] as they are diſtinguiſh'd into *expiatory*, *euctical* and *euchariſtical*; and this ſeems to have been the ſubſtance of the primitive Religion, which was as plain and ſimple as the Times. When the Notions of Mankind grew more complex, Religion by degrees became ſo too, and ſpread

[a] See Bp. *Sherlock*'s Uſe and Intent of Proph. S. 2. or Dr. *Winder*'s Hiſt. of Knowledge, p. 26, 27.

[b] See Part 2. p. 29. Note d. and p. 30. Note a. c. with Dr. *Winder* on the Subject p. 30.

itſelf together with their other Notices, all which were in ſome meaſure ſupplemental and ſubſidiary to it. Each new degree of Knowledge in each part of Nature was a new opening of the Human Mind, ſtill more and more diſplaying the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the original Conſtitution of things and Conſtruction of Animals, as well as in the conſtant regular Preſervation of each Species of them, and pointing out their various Ends and Uſes, thereby enabling Man, to whom they were all ſubjected, to enter farther into this Conſtitution himſelf, as well by receiving the Benefits thereof more perfectly, as by reſembling his Creator in diſtributing the ſame more copiouſly, and both ways paying his moſt acceptable tribute of Duty and Devotion to the common Parent.

When the Lives of Men began to ſhorten, we find Arts increaſing much faſter in proportion; as it was fit they ſhould, ſince otherwiſe many Diſcoveries would drop before they could be brought to any tolerable Perfection, or apply'd to uſe; there being then no other Repoſitory for ſuch beſide the Memory of their Inventors: till at length came the Art of *Writing*, which drew along with it all the reſt,

* Part. 2. p. 19. add *Winder*. Hiſt. of Knowl. p. 221, 222.

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helping at once to ſpread and to perpetuate them. And it is worth obſerving, as was juſt hinted before,* that about the ſame time more frequent and more full Revelations were communicated to the World, which thereby became better qualified to receive, keep and convey them, as they were likewiſe diſpens'd in a way beſt ſuited to its own State, and which moſt effectually ſupply'd its Wants, and tended to give greater Light and Improvement to it as well as one another: as may be ſeen particularly in Part 2. We have ſeen in ſome meaſure how the caſe ſtood both with Religion and Science in the *Antediluvian* and *Patriarchal* Ages, and are ſufficiently acquainted with thoſe alterations it receiv'd under the *Iſraelites* and *Jews* by various additional Inſtitutions and a ſucceſſion of Prophets: not very unlike to which was a Light held forth to the Eaſt by their great Oracles *Zoroaſter* and *Confucius*, and to moſt parts of the Weſt by a long ſeries of their Philoſophers, as is obſerv'd in the ſame place. *

To theſe in its proper Seaſon ſucceeds *Chriſtianity*; of which there ſcarcely is occaſion to remark that it ſurpaſs'd them all as much as the Times of its Promulgation were ſuperior in all kinds of Knowledge to the paſt; and

* p. 67.

which was evidently as great an Improvement upon *Natural* Religion properly ſo call'd, as it was upon any of the former Diſpenſations, and might, I think, with juſt as much propriety, be term'd a bare Revival or Republication of the one as of the other. Though perhaps there may be ſome room to doubt whether even thoſe Ages, enlighten'd as they were above the former, were capable of receiving all the Improvement which it was fitted and deſign'd to give; whether the World was yet able to admit it in its utmoſt Purity and Perfection. On the contrary, there ſeem to have been ſo many Dregs of *Jewiſh* Superſtition and *Gentile* Philoſophy as required a long time to purge away, and from the one of which it had no ſooner got well clear, than it became immers'd and clouded in the other. * Even in its early Days we find it loaded with the refuſe of each Syſtem, which was brought in to explain Myſteries, or rather make them, in the Goſpel: till by Degrees itſelf is made a Matter of high Speculation and Refinement, and ſuch nice Diſputes † rais'd about the Natures of its Author and the preciſe *Modus* of their Union;

* Part 2. p. 83. 84.

† See *Conſtantine*'s excellent Letter on this Subject in *Euſeb. de Vit.* Conſt. c. 66, 67, *&c.*

alſo

alſo concerning the abſtract Nature and ſeparate Subſiſtence of the Human Soul, as ſerv'd one of them to fill the Eaſtern Church with Blood and Deſolation, and at length ſubject it to the *Mahometan* Yoke, for which alone it ſeem'd at that time fitted, * the other to introduce the Doctrine of *Purgatory*, and with it a long train of *Popiſh* Errors, which ended in a Weſtern Tyranny no leſs ſevere over both Soul and Body. Both theſe have indeed a long while oppreſs'd the *Chriſtian* World, and if they be altogether ſo bad as we have been uſed to eſteem them, are not at preſent eaſily accounted for; but we hope they may be found really not ſuch, [a] and that the ſame wiſe and good Ends

* Part. 2. p. 88. Not. [r]

[a] Popery (ſays Mr. *Worthington* Eſſ. p. 156.) itſelf begins 'to be aſhamed of ſome of its groſſer Errors, and its 'Divines of late have been forced to explain them in a 'manner more agreeable to Truth and Scripture. [and the ſame thing may be obſerv'd of the *Mahometan* Doctors in their Comments upon the *Koran*, as appears remarkably all through *Sale*'s Notes] Moreover that 'perſecuting Spirit which was the Reproach and Scandal 'of *Chriſtians*, is, God be praiſed, in a good meaſure 'abated among all ſorts and denominations of them; and 'we do not now hear ſo much of *Chriſtians* being Burnt 'and Tortured by *Chriſtians*. Nor do *Papiſts* at preſent 'ſeem to thirſt ſo much after *Proteſtant* Blood, though 'there is reaſon to ſuſpect that they ſtill retain too 'much of the old Leaven, durſt they ſuffer it to work

will appear to be accompliſh'd by them in due time, either before or at their expiration, as have been evident in moſt other Diſpenſations. [b] However, at the next great Æra which is, we think, juſtly ſtiled the *Reformation*, there appear'd ſufficient Tokens of this Progreſs in Knowledge we have been maintaining, and theſe ſucceeding ſo faſt one upon another that they cannot eſcape the ſlighteſt Obſervation. [c] Here the abovemention'd Branches of it are again united and affording mutual aſſiſtance and ſupport to one another. Science of all kinds, Human and Divine revives, and with it come new Methods of Communication (or rather it riſes as much above the paſt as theſe exceed all others before them) and ſince has been con-

[c] out. It is obſerved likewiſe that there is not that Ignorance [c] and Immorality to be objected againſt the *Papiſts* now [c] as formerly; Learning being no leſs propagated among [c] them than *Proteſtants:* many good and pious Books are [c] Publiſhed by their Clergy; nor are they ſo Scandalous [c] in their Lives as in the Ages preceding the Reformation, [c] but they in general are exemplary in their Behaviour, [c] and afford us Patterns in ſome things which we might [c] profit by.' The like has been obſerv'd of the *Mahometans* above.

[b] Of which ſee more in Part 2. p. 88, and 91.

[c] See ſome of the particulars in Part 2. p. 92. and *Worthington*'s account of the progreſs of Learning after its Revival. Eſſay, p. 200, *&c.* To which we may add, that the

tinuing to improve and to draw with it all collateral advantages down to the preſent Times.

The more we ſtill know of human Nature and become better vers'd in the Art of Living, (and who doubts but we do ſo daily?) the more enlarg'd and adequate Notions muſt we have of natural Religion, and thereby be better able to judge of and apply reveled: the more acquainted we are with the faculties of our own *Soul*, the better qualified muſt we be to regulate and improve them, to direct the reaſoning Power, aſſiſt the Memory, refine the Imagination; in each of which Points very conſiderable Diſcoveries have been made of late: the more we know of the *Body*, the more able we are to preſcribe a Regimen and remedy the ſeveral Diſorders of it: and (though it ſeems to be the intent of Providence, for reaſons obvious enough, that *Phyſic* in particular ſhould not receive the ſame degrees of Improvement with other Arts, yet) perhaps it would not be hard to prove,

the Avenues to Learning of all kinds have been plan'd out and open'd by Ld. *Bacon*, the Nature and moſt intimate Receſſes of the Human Mind unfolded and explain'd by *Locke*, the Frame and Conſtitution of the Univerſe by *Newton* (to name no other Writers of our own) in a more perfect Manner than ever was done or attempted ſince the Foundation of the World.

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were this a place for it, that we are actually able to effect this in a more perfect manner now than formerly; that 'tis rather our Obſervations on the Diſorders and Defects in each of theſe that multiply, than the Diſorders and Defects themſelves, excepting ſome ſuch as probably ariſe and propagate themſelves from ſome particular reigning Vices. [a]

The more we know of the *World*, the more we view its Order, Beauty, Symmetry; the uniform Laws which it is govern'd by, the juſt arrangement and mutual ſubſerviency of all its Parts, (and I need not obſerve how much this kind of Learning has of late encreas'd [b]) the more we ſee the Glory, and Perfection of its Architect, and are more fully ſatisfied that he deſign'd its ſeveral Inhabitants for Happineſs in general, and muſt approve of every regular conſiſtent method which they take to promote it. Such Obſervations on this World enable us likewiſe to argue from it to *another*, and

[a] If ſome new Diſtempers have ariſen of late 'tis likely others of an older date have ceas'd; as is obſerv'd by D. *Le Clerc*. 'Fuerunt ergo Morbi, nonnullorum Siderum 'inſtar, orti certo tempore, poſtea extincti ſunt; ſuntque 'alii, quos ortos quidem non ita pridem novimus, ſed 'quorum finem nondum videmus.' Diſſert. de Lepra *Moſaica* p. 9. Several Inſtances occur in *Barchuſen* De Medic. Orig. et Progr. Diſſ. 5. S. 6.

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conclude that that will probably go on in the like way, as conſiſting of the like Inhabitants, and conducted by the ſame hand. As the preſent World has generally improved hitherto, we may expect that for the ſame Reaſons, be they what they will, it ſhall continue to do ſo; and that the next will likewiſe be ſtill more and more improving: and by the ſame rule perhaps each Part and Member of it in its reſpective Order and Proportion; every diſtinct *Claſs*, as it riſes above others through all that *Scale* of Beings which exiſt together, may preſerve the ſame Uniformity in point of *Succeſſion* too, may follow upon each other in no leſs regular Progreſs in a growing Happineſs through all Eternity; and thus the whole Creation be every way for ever Beautifying in its Maker's Eye, and drawing nearer to him by Degrees of reſemblance, as is ſuggeſted by an elegant Writer.* To theſe Deductions of Reaſon Revelation adds new Light and Confirmation, (as it is in like

[b] Of this and the Benefit the World receives from it, ſee *Worthington* Eſſ. p. 94, &c. 'And if *Natural Philoſo-* 'phy in all its parts by purſuing this method ſhall at length 'be perfected, the bounds of *Moral Philoſophy* will alſo 'be enlarged.' *Newt.* Opt. B. 3. And that *ſupernatural* Light or Knowledge will be Increas'd in the ſame way, its Hindrances being of the very ſame kind, ſee Bp. *Butler's* Analogy p. 262, &c. 2d Edit.

* *Spectator* N° 111.

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manner itſelf illuſtrated and eſtabliſh'd by them) it carries on and completes theſe Notices of Natural Religion, and Improves the Proſpect by expreſs Declarations of the unlimited Goodneſs of our Creator towards *all* his Works; by giving *us* in particular a poſitive Aſſurance that we ſhall be exactly diſpoſed of in another State according to our reſpective Deſerts and Qualifications: fixing and aſcertaining our Hopes of arriving at thoſe Bleſſed *Manſions*, where we ſhall find room for the free exerciſe and full enjoyment of each good Moral Habit and intellectual Accompliſhment: furniſhing ample Motives for our perſeverance in this Courſe, and guarding againſt every Deviation from it, eſpecially againſt that very dangerous attendant on the nobleſt Diſpoſitions, Pride and Self-ſufficiency: keeping us in a ſtrict Dependence on that God who is to be both our Guide thither and our great Reward there; in whoſe Hands we always are and ought to wiſh ourſelves; and to whoſe Bounty alone we owe and ſhould be always very ſenſible that we do owe *every good and every perfect Gift.* *

Laſtly, the more we trace the ways of Providence in the *Moral* World, as alſo the manner of conducting every *Diſpenſation* of Reveled

* *James* 1. 17.

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Religion (and we have had much better means of tracing each of them) we ſee more of the Deſigns and Purpoſes of each than thoſe before us could, and from the manner in which this Proſpect has already open'd have ground to think it will ſtill more and more enlarge; and though yet far from being able to comprehend the whole Scheme (which is not to be wonder'd at in Beings which ſo lately ſprung from *Nothing*) yet we do comprehend enough already to convince us that there is a wiſe and good one laid from the beginning, and executed in a regular gradation; and from thence alſo can infer that it will ſtill be farther anſwering its ſeveral Ends and ſtill appearing more to do ſo: that the *Manner* how this is to receive its Completion will unfold itſelf as we proceed in the ſtudy of it, adding our own Obſervations to thoſe of Times paſt, and *comparing Spiritual things with Spiritual*; as we do thoſe of the Natural World with one another, whereby we have diſcover'd ſeveral of its general Laws unknown to former Ages, and probably by them judg'd undiſcoverable; and from ſome others juſt beginning to diſcover themſelves, find more room daily to believe the Caſe will be the ſame with thoſe who ſhall come after us. And thus it may be made appear that the Means of Knowledge

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natural, *moral* and *reveled* have been imparted in a much more ample manner than ever to *us on whom the Ends of the World are come*. Why a more proper Application of them does not follow, why a proportional improvement of theſe ſame Advantages is not at all times made, as this ſeems not to have a neceſſary Connection with the former, it muſt be accounted for on other Principles. Whether by all theſe Means the World might and ought to have more true *Religion* and ſound *Morals* now than formerly, will ſcarcely admit a doubt: but whether it actually has or not, becomes a very different enquiry. Though perhaps ſomething might be ſaid in favour of the preſent Times in both reſpects.

Firſt, That we exceed the wiſeſt among ancient Heathens, who either practis'd or at leaſt permitted and connived at the Worſhip of monſtrous Deities and moſt unnatural Rites, is readily allow'd, and with reaſon attributed to the ſuperiority of the *Chriſtian* Diſpenſation, in compariſon with which former Ages are juſtly term'd Days of Darkneſs; and that we of the Reformation as much excell the dark times of *Monkery* in rational true Piety might perhaps be as eaſily granted, and with equal Juſtice aſcribed to the ſuperior Knowledge that we

we have of our own Diſpenſation. We have indeed leſs Shew and Ceremony now than ever, leſs of the *Form of Godlineſs* in general, but 'tis hoped not leſs of the real Power. Unprofitable Auſterities are rather chang'd for that more *reaſonable Service* and Devotion which renders the Deity amiable and the Imitation of him uſeful to Mankind; which makes each Worſhipper more happy in himſelf, and helpful to his Fellow-Creatures. There ſeems to be much leſs of *Superſtition* and reliance on ſuch things as can at beſt be but *Means* to Religion, and often hardly that; nay rather tend to take Men off the proper Principle, and ſubſtitute another very different in its room; teaching them to *compound* for real Goodneſs the Subſtance of all true Religion, by that which has not ſo much as even its Shadow; and leading them to contend about that with ſuch a Temper as could not poſſibly be exercis'd or entertain'd in any thing that bore a near relation to the other. It ſeems, I ſay, as if there were leſs of all this, and that there would be leſs yet, would all thoſe who perceive its remains unite in oppoſition to it with that Zeal and Soberneſs which true Religion only can inſpire.

As to that Spirit of *Infidelity* which ſo remarkably prevails at preſent, they who are confident

fident that they underſtand Religion thoroughly and profeſs it in its utmoſt purity, muſt condemn this Humour of examining all parts of it as abſolutely bad and of pernicious conſequence: they who are not ſo ſanguine will conclude that there are very good Ends to be ſerv'd by it, whatever be the Fate or the Intent of ſuch (and ſuch it muſt be own'd there are) as moſt injuriouſly oppoſe Religion: Theſe believe that there is the ſame neceſſity for ſuffering this *Heretical turn* in general, as for any particular *Hereſies*, and that thereby already Truths of great importance are made manifeſt. They ſee and lament the conſequences of long neglecting to review Eſtabliſhments, and ſuffering the public Wiſdom of paſt Ages to ſerve here, and here only, for all following ones.[a] They think there

[a] 'But there are few Chriſtian Princes who lay this to 'heart, and Divines have quite others things in their 'thoughts: their great Buſineſs is to maintain what is 'eſtabliſh'd, and to diſpute with thoſe who find fault with 'it. On the other hand, Knowledge or Reſolution is 'wanting, and there is not enough of Honeſty or Great-'neſs of Soul to confeſs the Truth. Few Writers have 'the courage to ſpeak ſo impartially as the famous Author 'of the Hiſtory of the Reformation in *England* has done, 'in the Preface to his ſecond Vol. It is thought by many 'Perſons that all would be ruin'd if the leaſt alteration 'was made. Some of theſe Defects — are now become 'inviolable Cuſtoms and Laws. Every body fancies true

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has been ſo much *Wood*, *Hay*, *Stubble* built on the Foundation as muſt take a conſiderable time to be removed; eſpecially when they ſee ſome got no farther yet than to doubt whether there be occaſion to have any thing at all removed, or even to deny that there is reaſon either for attempting or ſo much as wiſhing farther Reformation. They obſerve Light and Liberty at the ſame time advancing with an equal pace, and affording their mutual help, as they do generally, to ſeparate theſe from the *Gold*, *Silver*, *Precious Stones*; many having taken the Fan in hand and reſolv'd thoroughly to purge the Floor, though ſome be apt to throw away part of the good Seed together with the Chaff, which alſo generally has been the Caſe, and is a very natural one.

Secondly, As to the preſent *Morals*, it may perhaps be a queſtion whether they grow worſe upon the whole when it is conſider'd, that the leſs Vices as well as Uneaſineſſes of paſt times

' and pure *Chriſtianity* to be that which obtains in his ' Country, or in the Society he lives in; and it is not ſo ' much as put to the queſtion whether or not ſome things ' ſhould be altered. As long as *Chriſtians* are poſſeſſed ' with theſe Prejudices we muſt not expect to ſee Chriſti- ' anity reſtored to an entire Purity.' *Cauſes of the preſent Corruption of Chriſtians*, Part 2. p. 271.

are ſoon forgot, and the moſt flagrant, notorious ones only appear upon Record: — that we are apt to judge thoſe Evils greateſt which we feel ourſelves, and that Good leaſt which ſeems to rival and eclipſe our own, and raiſes Envy in the room of Admiration; and that hence one of them is often aggravated, the other extenuated moſt unduly.[a] On which account Vices may not probably be greater now in general, but we more immediately concern'd with them and ſuffering under them, eſpecially the reigning ones, (of which there always have been ſome *) as thoſe of Faction and Corruption, Luxury and Lewdneſs ſeem to be at preſent; and great ones indeed they are, eſpecially in our own Country; which yet perhaps are not worſe than the reigning ones of former Times: and 'tis to be remember'd that they come attended with the forementiond Advantages of Light and Liberty in ſuch a degree as we can

[a] See Bp. *Fleetwood*'s firſt Charge, p. 6, *&c.* and *Ibbot*'s Serm. on *Eccl.* 7. 10. with *Brown*'s Cauſes of Common Errors, B. 1. c. 6, *&c.*

* 'There is a certain Liſt of Vices committed in all 'Ages, and declaimed againſt by all Authors, which 'will laſt as long as Human Nature; or digeſted into 'common places may ſerve for any Theme, and never 'be out of date until Dooms-day.' *Brown*'s Vulgar Errors, p. 22.

never

never be too thankful for, and which we hope will ſpeedily correct them, the one enabling Men ſoon to ſee their evil conſequences, the other allowing them full ſcope to cenſure and expoſe them; and through both theſe it may be that each other Vice becomes more open and apparent now, rather than of ſuperior ſize and ſtrength. So that concerning the preſent Times we have ſome room to think that they are not abſolutely worſe than all before them as to *Morals*.[b] Perhaps I may be allow'd to advance a ſtep farther, and ſuppoſe them better

[b] I believe it would be hard to produce modern inſtances of Cruelty and Barbarity in any civilized State, whether in War or Peace, equal to ſuch as were decreed publickly and executed without the leaſt ſeeming remorſe by the politeſt People of Antiquity: Witneſs their frequent refuſing Quarter, their Triumphs, torturing of Slaves; their Proſcriptions, Poiſonings, expoſing Children, Rapes, *&c.* which need no aggravation. There is even at this Day a ſort of Decency in all our public Councils and Deliberations: and I believe the boldeſt of our Demagogues would hardly undertake in a popular Aſſembly to propoſe any thing parallel to the Rape of the *Sabines*, the moſt unjuſt uſage of *L. T. Collatinus*, or the ungrateful treatment of *Camillus*, which, as a learned Father obſerves, were pieces of Iniquity agreed to by the public Body of the *Romans*. Inſtances of the ſame kind with the two laſt every one knows occur frequently among the *Greeks* as well as *Romans* in the politeſt Ages of their Government. ſee Sir *T. P. Blount* Eſſ. p. 145

in ſome reſpects; that we have certain Virtues now in greater Perfection, particularly more of true *Charity* or *Univerſal Benevolence*, than ever ſince the time of primitive *Chriſtianity*.[c] — But if this be deem'd a miſtake and too partial fondneſs for the preſent Times, I truſt it will be alſo judg'd a pardonable one amid ſo much moſt evident Partiality againſt them; eſpecially as it is on the charitable ſide, and tends to make them really better than they would be, did worſe opinions of them univerſally prevail: which brings me, in the laſt place, to the *Conſequences* that attend the other way of thinking.

Theſe have been hinted at in the beginning of this Diſcourſe, and might be ſhewn more particularly to affect the Honour of God, our own Happineſs, and that of others; in as much as the foregoing ſuppoſition caſts a Cloud over

[c] I may add, that there ſeems to be a more perfect reſignation to the Will of God and acquieſcence in his Providence among all Ranks of Men; a greater Firmneſs in enduring Pain, more Chearfulneſs and Courage in ſubmitting to Death, among the generality even of loweſt Education: in ſhort, that Mankind may be ſaid to grow more ſpiritual and *intellectual*, in theſe and many other reſpects, than they have been in former Ages. 'I think it may be ſaid, in Honour of the preſent Age, 'that Controverſy is carried on with more Decency and 'good Manners than in any former Period of time that 'can

all the Works of God, confounds our Notions of his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, raiſes Diſtruſt, if not Diſbelief of all his Perfections, and thereby deadens our Devotion toward him; damps and diſcourages all Study, and deſtroys the pleaſure that would ariſe from a Survey of both the *Natural* and *Moral* World, and a Reflection on the Station we hold in them; renders us far leſs ſenſible of the Happineſs within our power, and by conſequence makes us receive leſs from them; not only hinders Men from growing better, but actually makes them worſe, and ſuffers the World daily to decline through a perſwaſion that it is deſign'd to do ſo; it having been obſerv'd that thoſe Writings which *villanize* Mankind have a pernicious tendency towards propagating and protecting Villany, and help moſt of all to teach

' can be named; which together with the *Toleration* ' granted by Law in this and other Proteſtant Countries ' for all Perſons to worſhip God in their own way, and ' that *Chriſtian* Charity and Moderation which is gener- ' ally ſhewn towards thoſe that differ from us, ſeems al- ' ready to be attended with good Effect. — the ſetting up ' ſo many *Charity-Schools* as have of late years been erected ' in theſe Kingdoms, — the forming of *Religious Societies*, ' and other good means, have greatly contributed to the ' promoting the Knowledge and practiſe of Virtue and ' Religion among us.' *Worthington*'s Eſſay, p. 157, 158.

and encourage it; in the ſame manner as thoſe which perpetually dwell on the dark ſide of things and difficulties that attend our ſearch after the ways of God, ſerve only to darken the view ſtill more and multiply theſe very Difficulties. How much better both the End and the Effect of thoſe which place Human Nature in its faireſt Light, and repreſent the *lovely Form* as worthy of its Author; as well as of thoſe that diſplay the Beauty and Beneficence of the Divine Oeconomy, and produce an Aſſurance of that paternal Care and Conduct of us here, which brings the trueſt Enjoyment and moſt grateful Acknowledgement of preſent Benefits, and likewiſe begets a joyful Hope and Expectation of more ſubſtantial ones hereafter!

The *Conſequences* of the foregoing Doctrine might be urg'd farther in regard both to the *Atheiſt* and *Deiſt*, to convince the one that all things have not gone at random, but that there are plain tokens of a Plan and Government, and from what has already paſt, reaſon to think that more of it will ever appear and in a ſtill more perfect manner: to ſhew the other, that as the ſeveral Diſpenſations of what we call Reveled Religion have hitherto been in the main conformable to thoſe of Providence in both the natural and moral World, this poſſibly may

may come from the ſame Author, and receive yet farther increaſe, which theſe alſo do as they are daily better underſtood.

But if this be not the caſe in any degree here, we ſeem to have nothing left whereon to ground an *Analogical* Argument (which yet is our beſt, if not our only natural Argument) for an hereafter; no viſible footſteps of Wiſdom and Goodneſs to conduct us in our ſearch after a Firſt Cauſe, no ſettled foundation for our Hopes of Futurity, the baſis of all Natural Religion: All is Chaos and Confuſion thus far, and therefore may be ſo, for ought we know, eternally; either without any good conſiſtent Scheme at all, or that as ſoon as fix'd unfix'd again, and diſappointed: — in ſhort, the Divine Government, if there be one, muſt on this Scheme be inferior to moſt Human Adminiſtrations. Thus then we ſee how neceſſary it is to form right Notions of the paſt State of the World, eſpecially in regard to that important point, *Religion*, in order to judge how it will be for the future, and in what manner we are to conduct ourſelves. If it has hitherto been really progreſſive, we find good reaſon to expect the ſame ſtill farther. We have ſtrong motives to go into this Scheme ourſelves, and clear directions how to proceed in it. Inſtead of looking back and

labouring to confine it to the model of paſt Times, we learn rather with the great *Apoſtle*, to *forget thoſe things which are behind, reaching forward unto thoſe things that are before, and preſſing toward the Mark.** And to uſe the ſame *Apoſtle*'s advice, *Let us therefore as many as deſire to be perfect, be thus minded.* As we have the beſt means of effecting this within our Power; as we live under the mildeſt, moſt indulgent of all Governments, and enjoy the Bleſſing of *Liberty* in that perfection which has been unknown to former Ages; a Bleſſing [ſuffer me once more to remind us of it] which includes every thing valuable in Life, and above all things tends moſt to accelerate the Progreſs abovementioned: Let us inſtead of making it either a Covering for *Sedition*† againſt ſuch a Government, or a Cauſe of gratifying our *Maliciouſneſs* againſt each other, be diligent in uſing it to the good purpoſes for which it is ſo liberally indulg'd us, and render ours as much ſuperior to thoſe Nations that are deprived of it, as moſt other Countries are obſerved to have been in like Circumſtances.

Let us concur with this auſpicious courſe of Providence, and each contribute our endea-

* *Phil.* 3. 13, *&c.*

† Vid. *Benſon* on 1 *Pet.* 2. 16.

yours

vours towards carrying on this Progreſs by every ſerious, fair and free Enquiry: *free*, not only from all outward Violence and Clamour, but alſo from (what our moſt holy Religion with the greateſt reaſon equally condemns as being the Root from whence theſe ſpring) all inward Bitterneſs, Wrath, Hatred: learning to bear with one another's Miſtakes in this as well as other matters; nay rather the more here, ſince theſe are of the higheſt conſequence, and this the only proper method to remove them: thus labouring as well to reform the Errors of our Brethren in Love, as to promote and confirm their Knowledge of the Truth; *not for that* in either caſe *we have Dominion over their Faith, but as being Helpers of their Joy.* * And thus ſhall Religion be at length ſuffer'd to partake the Benefit of thoſe Improvements which every thing beſide enjoys.

I deſire it may be obſerv'd here once for all, that when I mention *Improvements* in Religion I don't by any means intend a Diſcovery of new Points, or improving upon the original Revelation itſelf ‡ in any thing eſſential to the general Doctrine of Salvation: but only a more perfect comprehenſion of what was formerly deliver'd; a view

* 2 *Cor.* 1. 24.

‡ See Part 2. p. 86, 87.

of

of the extent and excellence of this great Myſtery conceal'd from former Ages, and which though given almoſt all at once, yet was receiv'd perhaps but partially, at leaſt by the bulk of Mankind, as was obſerv'd above, † and ſoon adulterated to ſuch a degree, as (I beg leave to repeat it) may take yet more time to rectify; eſpecially when ſo much Rubbiſh has been ſince continually thrown upon the Scriptures, both by Tranſlators and Expoſitors, as if we ſet aſide the care of a particular Providence (which has in this reſpect [ſo far I mean as relates to the Text] been very remarkable) might make us juſtly wonder they have not ſunk under it. This has in theſe parts of the World been for ſome time a clearing off by the help of a more ſound Philoſophy, as well as by more ſober Rules of Criticiſm, a much more cloſe, conſiſtent method of Interpretation; which muſt produce as great a difference in them as if they were quite different Books. Though perhaps even here it would not be a difficult taſk, were it not too invidious, to ſuggeſt means of yet farther Improvement. Perhaps we ought to attend ſtill more to the *Hebrew* Idiom, and obſerve the vaſt diſparity between the Eaſtern way of ſpeaking and our

† ib. p. 85.

own;

own; for want of which, 'tis to be fear'd, we oft retain the Words without the Senſe, nay with a very different one, and by adhering too much to the Letter are apt to overſtrain moſt things, and carry them both beyond common Reaſon and the nature of the Subject. Perhaps our very Reverence for theſe ſacred Writings miſapply'd, our too unguarded Zeal to do them honour and ſupport their Divine Authority againſt that Church which ſubſtitutes another in its room, may have contributed to caſt a Cloud over the whole, which makes us as it were afraid to look into them, and examine them with the ſame freedom that we do and find we muſt do every other Book which we deſire to underſtand: — I mean the Notion of an *abſolute*, immediate *inſpiration* of each part and period, even where the Writers themſelves, by the very manner of expreſſing themſelves, moſt effectually diſclaim it: [a] which beſide the bad effects it may be ſuppoſed to have at preſent, when once it appears, as ſoon perhaps it may, to have no good foundation in theſe holy Books, [aa] 'tis to be fear'd, it will produce a

[a] See Inſtances in *Whitby* on the *N. T.* Gen. Pref. p.6.

[aa] As I would not give any unneceſſary Offence in ſuch a tender point as this, which moſt Writers are ſtill very unwilling to give up expreſsly, though they ſeem forc'd

worſe, by tending to diſcredit that *partial* one whether of *Guidance* or *Suggeſtion*, which upon ſome occaſions they do claim, which is abſolutely requiſite to ſecure a due authority to them,

forc'd to treat it either in a confuſed or a contradictory way, I ſhall beg leave to explain myſelf a little upon this Head. The true ſenſe then of the *Divine Authority* of the Books of the *O. T.* and which perhaps is enough to denominate them in general Θεοπνευστοι, ſeems to be this, that as in thoſe times God has all along, beſide the inſpection of his general Providence, interfered upon particular occaſions by giving expreſs Commiſſions to ſome Perſons (thence call'd *Prophets*) to declare his will in various manners and degrees of evidence [ſee *Smith*. Sel. Diſc. N.6.] as beſt ſuited the Occaſion, Time and Nature of the ſubject, and in all other caſes left them and the reſt of the World wholly to themſelves; in like manner he has interpoſed his more immediate aſſiſtance (and notify'd it to them, as they did to the World) in the *recording* of theſe Revelations, ſo far as that was neceſſary, amidſt the common (but from hence term'd *Sacred*) Hiſtory of thoſe times, and mix'd with various other Occurrences, in which the Hiſtorian's own natural Qualifications were ſufficient to enable him to relate things with all the accuracy they required, and where a ſupernatural interpoſition would have been unworthy of its Author: which mixture of Divine and Human in the ſame Times, Things, Perſons and their Hiſtory, ſeems much more conformable to the other Works of God, and affords many Circumſtances which more clearly evince and will in all ages more inconteſtibly confirm the Reality of a Divine concurrence (by offering ſo many means to confute every pretended inſtance of it were it groundleſs) than

and which when prudently diſtinguiſh'd from the other has, and we truſt ever will appear to have, ground ſufficient to ſupport itſelf. To this high, I had almoſt ſaid, blind, reverence

than if ſuch Revelations had been all made at one time, by themſelves and by men altogether over-ruled in the delivery of them. This likewiſe ſeems in a good meaſure to have been the caſe with the *N. T.* Writers; who notwithſtanding the things they were to deliver are moſtly of greater conſequence and more cloſely united in point of Time, Place and other Circumſtances; notwithſtanding the extraordinary aſſiſtance of the Spirit which was to abide with them and lead them into all neceſſary Truth, and for the moſt part either the thing itſelf ſhews, or they give us ſufficient intimation when they have recourſe to that aſſiſtance; yet from the very form in which they uſually deliver them it muſt appear, that this Influence is no leſs frequently ſuſpended in the delivery of theſe fundamental Truths; and beſide theſe, how oft do the ſame Perſons condeſcend to treat of other inferior, controverſial Matters, uſeful indeed ſome to the then preſent, ſome to all future times, but ſurely of a very different nature from the former, and in which that Influence and Aſſiſtance does not ſeem ſo requiſite! How juſtly do they place the Evidence of Facts on their own Senſes only! declaring *what they have ſeen and heard*, which at all times may, and which alone can be produced as proper Proof. In Reaſonings how beautifully do they add their private Sentiments, and in affairs of ſmaller moment even their Conjectures, to what they had received from the Lord himſelf! where Circumſtances ſhew us the expediency of ſuch Additions, and where Common Senſe was and will be always equally ſufficient to diſtinguiſh one from the other, as it is to in-

for the words of Holy Scriptures, perhaps I may be allow'd to add another full as great relating to the Senſe: not the true, real one, for which we cannot ſurely have too much concern; but one which ſometimes widely varies from it, and yet is very apt to ſlip into its place, the commonly receiv'd, *traditional* one. This Doctrine we learn from thoſe very Adverſaries which in the former we were ſtriving to oppoſe: and though indeed it have a ſhew of deference to public Wiſdom and

interpret the whole Scriptures, ſo far as they become neceſſary to be interpreted, without any other more infallible Guide. But Common Senſe is generally laid aſide in Subjects of this nature. Many good Men think they can never do too much to decry it, to ſet the Bible at variance with it, or carry the whole up beyond its reach, though by ſchemes merely of their own Invention, rather than forming any judgement from what they really find in that ſacred Book. Not content with a *Moral Evidence* of its *Truth*, which is clear, ſtrong and every way ſufficient for the conviction of all fair Enquirers, they muſt needs introduce another where there is no room for it, and inſiſt on ſuch *univerſal* abſolute *Infallibility* as never can be made out to thoſe who are not already perſwaded of it (and who can have no other Evidence for ſuch perſwaſion than the ſame moral one on which that *Truth* is grounded) and which is at laſt either uſeleſs or inconſiſtent with thoſe natural Proofs which conſtitute the Credibility of this and every other Hiſtory ſo circumſtanc'd. Is not a Moral Evidence enough to aſſure us of

the

Humility, yet in time probably may be attended with no better Conſequences; if Men cannot diſtinguiſh pure primitive *Chriſtianity* from that which oft may happen not to be ſuch, and through which the other always ſuffers; and if in this, which of all things is moſt deſerving of their care and caution, they will content themſelves with the Senſe of the Multitude, and take that for a ſure, ſufficient Rule, which they know to be far from even excuſing thoſe who have means of judging for themſelves,

the Genuineneſs and Incorruptneſs of theſe Writings? Why ſhould it not then, where it can take place, be ſufficient for the Authors themſelves to proceed on in writing, and equally aſcertain the Truth of what they have written? and why ſhould the generality of the *Compoſition* (were any great ſtreſs ever to be laid upon it) be deem'd altogether Divine, when the *Conveyance*, which ſo much affects that, is allow'd to be no more than Human? Moſt Perſons now begin to ſee that there is at leaſt ſome mixture of this latter in the *Language*, and I believe upon due conſideration it will appear that there is no greater Difficulty to admit it in the *Senſe* on ſeveral Occaſions.

I am very ſenſible that what is here hinted is too ſuperficial to give any tolerable ſatisfaction on ſo nice a point, but can with great Truth aſſure the Reader, that the intention of it is not to degrade or in the leaſt diſparage the Holy Scriptures, but rather to free them from an unneceſſary load of Objections and render them more uſeful to the chief purpoſes for which I humbly apprehend they were deſign'd.

and

and which they would be extremely unwilling to abide by in almoſt any other caſe. — But I ſhould be ſorry to be found ſo far contradicting my main Deſign as to make things in any reſpect worſe at preſent than they really are. On this Subject I could hardly avoid hinting at ſome few of thoſe Rubs that ſeem to lie moſt in our way to Perfection: but notwithſtanding theſe or any others which could be produced, I muſt beg leave to conclude that we have Encouragement enough left to proceed with chearfulneſs and vigour in it, till every thing which lets, in God's good time be taken away, and true Religion, Righteouſneſs and Virtue ſhine in perfect Beauty: *till we all come in the Unity of the Faith and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the meaſure of the Stature of the Fulneſs of Chriſt.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAGE 18. line 10. *after* unreasonable in itself *add* which I think may be fairly done after what has been wrote upon the subject both by Dr. *Jenkin* V. 1. c. 1. and the Ingenious Author of an *Enquiry into the Evidence of the Christian Religion*, sect 8. — p. 63. Note, l. 26. *for* Faith, in *read* Faith in,—p. 71. N. b. l. 5. *r.* eight. —p. 73. l. 23. *for* they *r.* many of them, *and add in marg.* * *Winder* Hist. of Knowl. p. 110, *&c. Patrick* in *Gen.* 11. 2. — p. 102. N. a. l. 14. *for* p. 96. *r.* 93. — p. 108. N. l. 14. *for* Rom. *r.* Rome. — p. 112. l. 6. *after* perfect one, *insert*) — p. 114. *for* p. 107. *r.* 97. —p. 120. N. b. l. 2. *for* p. 29. *r.* 57. ibid. N. c. *for* p. 29. *r.* 56. — p. 124. * *for* p. 25. *r.* 50. — p. 126. * l. 1. *r. Sanhedrim.* — p. 128. N. a. l. 20. *r.* sequutus. — p. 129. N. b. l. 8. *r.* Fol. 4. — p. 131. Note. l. 4. *r.* τιμωριας. — p. 132. N. l. 7. *r.* μυθος. — p. 136. l. 17. *after* Government *for* . *r.* , — p. 144. l. 10. *dele* and. — p. 145. l. 24. *r.* reason. — p. 159. l. 12. *for* instructed *r.* intrusted. — p. 160. l. 7. *for* God's *r.* God. — p. 172. N. l. 11. for *Bub. r. Bud.* — p. 172. * *for* Part 2. *r.* p. 53. — p. 173. N. l. 1. *r.* διαφορον. p. 174. l. 2. *for* he *r.* the. — p. 176. N. l. *last r.* Treatises. — p. 183. l. 1. *r.* improvement. — p. 184. l. 2. *r.* continually. — p. 194. † *for* p. 25. *r.* p. 50. — p. 216. N. e. l. 1. *for* p. 18. *r.* 36. — p. 217. * *r.* Herm. — p. 225. * *for* p. 7. 8, 9. *r.* 10, 11. 12. — p. 227. N. b. *for* p. 29. *r.* 56. ib. *for* p. 30. *r.* 58, 59. — p. 227. * *for* p. 19. *r.* 158. — p. 229. * *for* p. 67. *r.* 158. — p. 230. * *for* p. 83, 84. *r.* p. 169. — p. 231. * *for* p. 88. *r.* 175. — p. 232. N. b. *for* p. 88. and 91. *r.* 175. and 181. ib. N. c. *for* p. 92. *r.* 182. — p. 249. ‡ *for* p. 86, 87. *r.* p. 170, 171. — p. 250. † *for* p. 85. *r.* p. 167.

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